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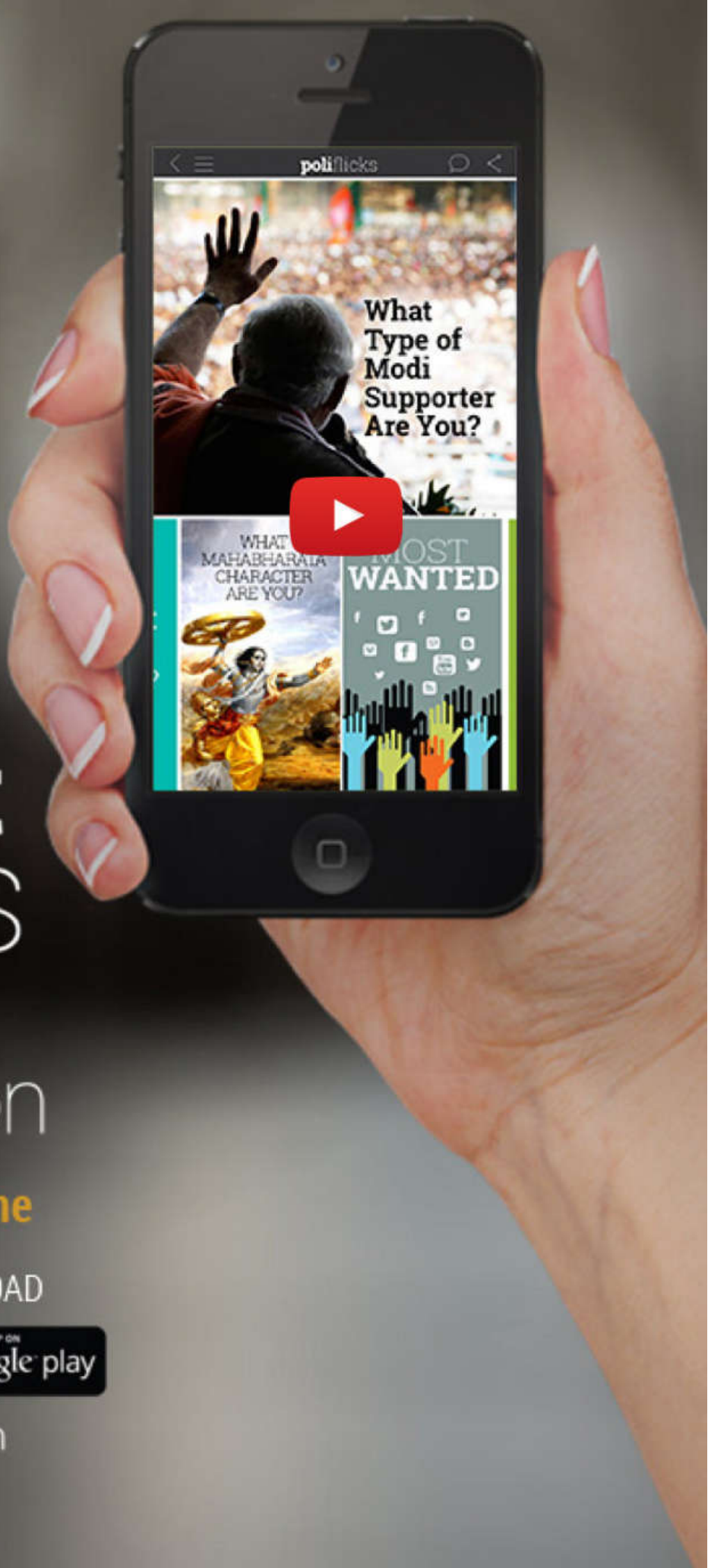
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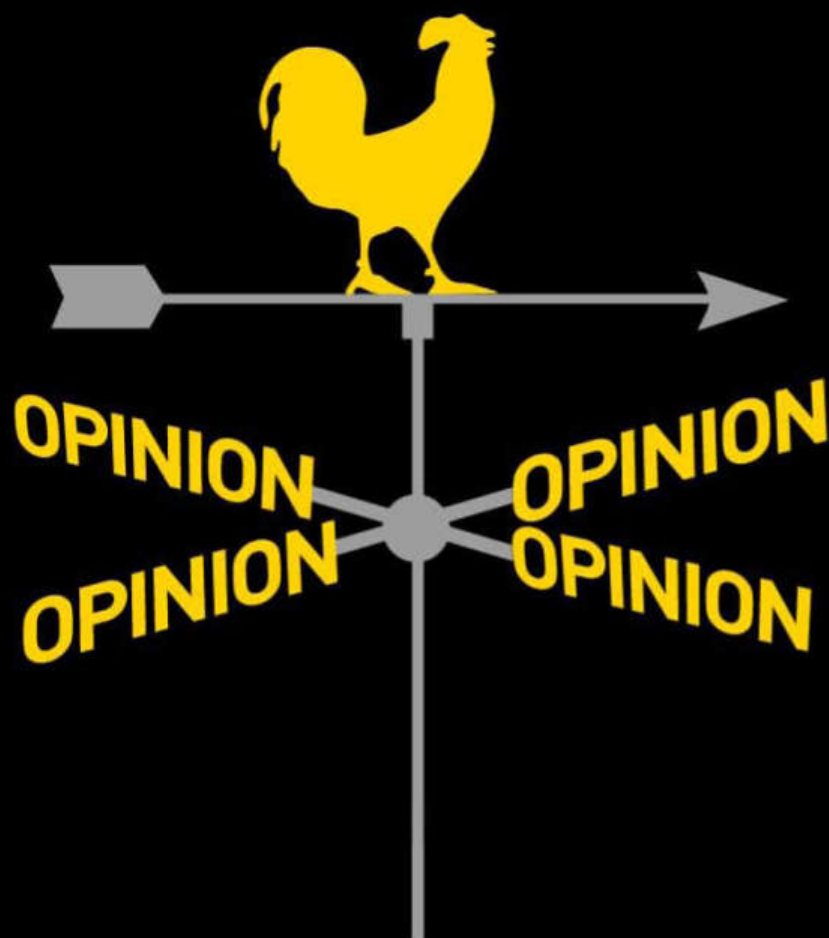
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The most amusing sight for me is to see two young people on a date in a restaurant spending all their time on their respective screens without so much as a glance at each other. This kind of behaviour is common among digital natives. Undoubtedly, the mobile and internet revolution, which has exploded simultaneously all across the world, is the defining story of our times. In this 'Age of Technology', no task is more than a touch away, and no social, family or work-related network is ever out of reach. We're reaching a point where being connected constantly is no longer a professional necessity, it is becoming an emotional need.

According to a 2012-15 survey by Baylor's Hankamer School of Business, Texas, an average person checks his phone 150 times in 16 hours of awake time—or once every six minutes. Another study conducted by Cisco in 2012 revealed that a staggering 96 per cent young Indians check social media first thing every morning, as opposed to an almost-as-high 90 per cent globally. No wonder then that technology companies, dealing in the latest hardware that helps save nanoseconds for any task, and software firms ranging from social media applications to e-commerce marketplaces, are the new corporate behemoths of this age. According to the 2015 list by *Forbes* magazine, the top three companies of the world in terms of brand valuation were all in the technology business.


While constant connectivity brings certain natural advantages, its side effects are slowly changing the way we are by impacting our personal and professional relationships, as well as our mental and physical well-being. Experts say that there is now a thin line between being a social media enthusiast and a digital addict. They contend that the link between mental health and 24x7 digital connectivity is a complicated one, and that it is sparking a new wave of illnesses that we're all equally susceptible to.

Although internet addiction is not yet a clinical diagnosis in India, doctors and researchers at NIMHANS, Bengaluru, describe it as a cause for "serious concern". Syndromes such as Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO), in which people want to be the first to share or comment on a post, and Facebook Addiction Disorder, in which users keep checking their phones for 'likes', are more than just social disorders that are now being debated as hotly as Phantom Vibration Syndrome, where people think their phone is vibrating even when it isn't, and the loosely coined Selfitis, which is the obsession with clicking selfies.

China was one of the countries to wake up early to the dangers of internet addiction. In January, the Shanghai Mental Health Center conducted a study which showed that being addicted to the Net can cause neurological changes similar to those who have alcohol and cocaine dependency.

Our cover story this week looks at the dangers of digital addiction through case studies and expert analyses that not only explain the nature of the problem but also reveal its early symptoms. Through the course of her reporting, Assistant Editor Aditi Pai got acquainted with people whose battles with various digital disorders offer an astonishing new perspective on the Internet Age. One of them, an engineer living in Lucknow, was so hooked on forging "cyber relationships" with women that he is unable to establish a real-life relationship any longer. Another, a 13-year-old boy from Mumbai, had to be hospitalised because he attacked his parents for taking "my phone—my life—away".

We surround ourselves with the technology we love—smartphones, tablets, social media, shopping apps, instant messaging—but it may be time to ask ourselves, do we love it too much? While the growing influence of digital products is inevitable, acknowledging its dangers may be the first step in finding a healthy balance. We need to remember there is nothing that can replace a warm handshake, a tight hug, or eye contact that isn't made through Skype.


 (Aroon Purie)



OUR JULY
2012 COVER

COVER STORY
DIGITAL ADDICTION

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More and more people are losing themselves to the virtual world, spending hours on social media and web chats. Experts say it is time to treat this addiction as a disorder.



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As an ever-expanding middle class drives the demand for affordable housing across cities, private developers, on cue, offer more bang for the buck.

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When statistics, annotations, archives, journalism and data start entering art works, it's time to question art. But is it reflective of the age we live in?

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Cover by **ROHIT CHAWLA**& **SAURABH SINGH**DIGITAL IMAGING BY **AMARJEET SINGH NAGI**



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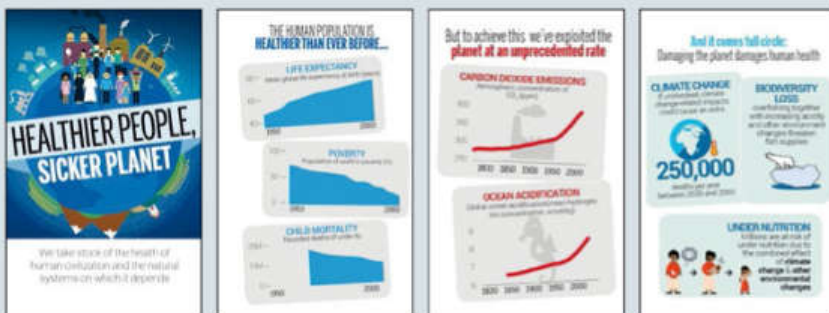
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MOST POPULAR INTERACTIVES

End of freedom How laws in some countries restrict economic and social opportunities for married women. <http://bit.ly/10cfBXV>



Not so healthy Did you know the human population is getting healthier than ever before, but at a huge environmental cost. <http://bit.ly/1FKaQNe>



Now trending One Katy Perry is equal to four-and-a-half Big Bs. That's the equation between Twitter's world #1 and India's #1 on Twitter. <http://bit.ly/1FcBLX6>



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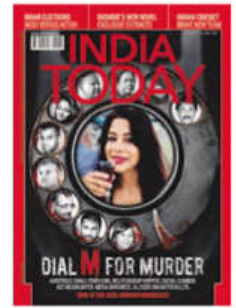
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India ranks 59th in the list of most powerful passports	80,838
So Sorry video listing page	42,718

Dial M for Murder

SEPTEMBER 14, 2015

Ambitious small-town girl. Relationship hopper. Social climber. Ace headhunter. Media baroness. Alleged daughter killer. Who is the real Indrani Mukerjea?



“Indrani Mukerjea’s rags-to-riches-to-remand story underlies deep concerns about society’s growing greed for power, money and fame.”

J. AKSHOBHYA, *Mysuru*

Is Society to Blame?

Indrani Mukerjea may have murdered Sheena Bora or she may not have (Life, Loves and Lies of Indrani, September 14). But she is put on trial more for her lifestyle—using marriage as a stepping stone to success—than for the criminal act of murder, which is yet to be proved in a court of law. For a woman to display such ruthless opportunism is rare in a patriarchal society. The diatribe would have been less vitriolic if the same story had a male protagonist.

M.M. GURBAXANI, *Bengaluru*

The Sheena Bora murder case is deeply disturbing. The fact that she was allegedly killed by her mother shows the depraved mindset of a society where greed and lust can get the better off maternal emotions. If Indrani Mukerjea is proven guilty, she should be given the harshest punishment possible.

JOSEPH KUNNIRICKAL, *Kochi*

A Riveting Read



Sandeep Unnithan’s piece-by-piece recreation of the events leading up to the 1965 war was very informative (How India Foiled Pakistan’s ‘K’ Plot, September 14). Most of us didn’t know how Pakistan had planned an infiltration operation to ignite a resistance movement in Kashmir against the Indian government. Fifty years later, there is not much change in the India-Pakistan script. The latter has not shown any willingness to work with India on fighting terrorism and continues to thwart any peace-building initiative India takes towards stabilising the region.

POOJA DESHMUKH, *via email*

Your cover story reads like a spine-chilling, horror novel. I find it hard to believe that Peter Mukerjea had no inkling about wife Indrani’s past and never cared to know about her family during their 13 years of marriage. More truths will tumble out once police interrogates all the members of the Mukerjea and Bora families.

HARSH KALRA, *via email*

A fast-paced and aspirational society is driving ambitious men and women crazy for money and power. Even if Indrani Mukerjea didn’t kill Sheena, the fact that she led a double life, introducing her daughter as her sister, and tried her best to erase her not-so-pleasant past, exposes the insecurities that come with high-society living.

K.R. NAMBIAR, *Navi Mumbai*

After reading a number of features on Indrani Mukerjea, including this one, I am no wiser about the evidence that has been



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LIFE, LOVES AND
LIES OF INDRANI

In pursuit of success and power, Indrani gave no importance to family life and committed unpardonable mistakes alongside.
Sanjiv Gupta

This is a well-researched article. The writer has not been judgemental and has only presented the facts.
Shekhar Pataballa

COLLECTIVE CRUSADE

The Dalit farmers in Punjab have started a brilliant initiative to claim the land that is rightfully theirs.

Neo

NITISH GETS A MAKEOVER

Nitish Kumar’s JD(U) is going to lose the elections simply because it has joined hands with a corrupt politician like Lalu Prasad. Had JD(U) gone alone, it would have won a majority of seats in Bihar.

Ramesh

produced to link her to the murder of Sheena Bora. Whether Sheena was murdered by Indrani is yet to be established, but the latter has already been tried and convicted by a jury comprising her family and the media.

SHOHINI GHOSH, *Delhi*

Whose Side Will Ezhavas Swing?

Decades of fierce loyalty to the Left parties have not brought any tangible dividends to the Ezhava community or in any way helped in its upward mobility (BJP Targets Hindu Divided Family, September 14). It is time the Ezhavas carve a separate identity for themselves and vote for a party that they believe will not deceive them.

C.D. ANIYANKUNJU, *Jaipur*

Kerala is not acutely, but chronically caste-conscious. Where else would you find a Brahmana Samajam for Tamil Brahmins, a Yogakshema Sabha for Namboothiri Brahmins, a powerful Nair Service Society for the Nairs, an equally formidable Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam for the Ezhavas and so on. BJP President Amit Shah will find it extremely difficult to smear saffron on Kerala. Most Keralites still consider the BJP as a



No Room for Complacency

Team India, pleased as they must be at the Test series win in Sri Lanka, should still feel disappointed that the scoreline was 2-1 and not 3-0 (Team India's New Nucleus, September 14). Captain Virat Kohli deserves praise for showing a more restrained side while marshalling resources on the field. Kohli's march for a series win was supported by Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav. However, India must realise that the win came against a weak Sri Lankan team, and it should prepare for tougher battles against more competitive teams such as South Africa and Australia.

J. AKSHAY, *Bengaluru*

The young Team India under new captain Virat Kohli looks promising. Fresh from the win in Sri Lanka, the youngsters should now try to consolidate their performance by doing well in the upcoming series against South Africa. If Kohli can control his aggression on the field, this team can do wonders.

K.R. SRINIVASAN, *Secunderabad*

North Indian *bania* party. In Kerala, caste determines one's political fate. COLONEL C.V. VENUGOPALAN (RETD), *Palakkad*

The BJP's development agenda is a farce, and in each election it resorts to dividing the electorate on communal lines. In Kerala too, the party's attempt to consolidate its Hindu vote bank is in line with its policy of gaining traction by playing the religion card. It is sad that national parties don't want to focus on the larger issues of improving the socio-economic conditions of the state.

M.Y. SHARIFF, *Chennai*

Advantage BJP

As the stalwarts of the *mahagathbandhan* (Lalu-Nitish-Sonia combine) are busy taking potshots at each other, it's advantage Modi all the way (Modi Sets the Pace, September 14). People of Bihar are intelligent to look beyond caste and vote for a stable government.

HENA PRASUN, *Ahmedabad*

If the BJP can reach a conclusive seat-sharing pact with its allies in Bihar, then there is no way it cannot win the elections this time. People want change and they know that only Narendra Modi can turn around the state's fortunes. PAYAL SINHA, *Bhubaneswar*

WATCH THOSE EYES

As you read this, your eyes should be doing three things: Focusing from distance to near, converging inward to a single point and angling downward. But with electronic screens fast supplanting print, this law of nature is turning upside down: We are focusing too long, too close, too high and too often. As India fast tracks to the digital era and people work or play the day away on LCD screens, vision problems are spiralling. Computer Vision Syndrome



(CVS) is the catch-all term now doing the rounds. "The modern office environment—excessive use of computers, bad lighting and improper workstation design—has generated this occupational health hazard," says Dr Mahipal Sachdev of Centre for Sight in Delhi.

Let's do the math. If humans spend a third of their lives asleep and a third awake, most of the final third is spent staring at computer screens. And computers make the eye shift and focus between the screen, document, and keyboard 25,000 times a day, says a 2004 report by the Industrial Design Centre of IIT-Bombay. If an office-goer spends 80,000 hours sitting at a desk throughout his career, and more than 50 per cent use computers on the job—as estimated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the US—it's hardly a surprise that 88 per cent develop CVS.

by Damayanti Datta
September 17, 2007



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RADICAL REFORMS

Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi is in the thick of organising next month's Bihar elections but that hasn't stopped him from thinking ahead. The CEC is exploring a different approach for assembly polls due in other states next year. Elections in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry are proposed to be conducted simultaneously. All five state assemblies complete their terms in May and June next year. The EC will soon consult political parties to see how they can adjust the end of assembly terms before election dates are announced. The poll panel is also working on a second, and more radical, proposal—conducting all state polls at the same time of the year, preferably in the months of May and June.



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



LOAN MELA REDUX

The controversial loan melas of the 1980s may soon stage a comeback. The government-owned Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (Mudra) Bank will launch a campaign for loan distribution among small-time traders and retailers. Public sector banks have been asked to organise camps to facilitate loan distribution. Loan amounts will range between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh, and nearly 60 per cent of this will be disbursed in the ticket size of Rs 50,000 with no collateral. Loans can be withdrawn from ATMs with a Mudra Bank debit card. The BJP has instructed its cadres to lend support to the scheme set to be launched on September 25, before the crucial Bihar assembly polls.



RANJAN RAH

CLAIMING BERTH RIGHT

RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav seems so confident of the RJD-RJD alliance's victory in the Bihar assembly elections that on September 11 he claimed cabinet berths for his sons, **Tejaswi Yadav** (left) and **Tej Pratap**, in the next government. The doting father has already expelled Jagdish Rai from the party for raising his voice over not getting a ticket from Mahua, the seat Tej Pratap wants to contest from. But removing the next obstacle may not be so easy—younger son Tejaswi wants to contest from Raghapur, which at present is represented by JD(U) MLA Satish Kumar, who is unwilling to vacate his seat and might just turn a rebel if Lalu's son is fielded.

POLITICS OF REINCARNATION

On September 8, China held a massive rally in Lhasa to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of its Tibet Autonomous Region. Yu Zhengsheng, fourth-ranked member of the Politburo Standing Committee, declared a "steadfast struggle" against the Dalai Lama's supporters. It appears to be a long-drawn-out struggle—extending even to the afterlife. Rejecting the Dalai Lama's comments that he might not have a successor, the Communist Party's Norbu Dondup said the spiritual leader "can't deny the central government's right" to approve the new incarnation—a curious situation where a government is insisting that a lama, even against his wishes, must reincarnate.



MISSING YEDDYURAPPA

The BJP's strategy to keep former Karnataka CM **B.S. Yeddyurappa** out of state politics has backfired. The troika of Yeddyurappa-baiters—Jagdish Shettar, Prahlad Joshi and R. Ashoka—has been unable to counter the ruling Congress over farmer suicides. What's more, the Congress managed to clinch the coveted mayoral post in Bengaluru despite the BJP's civic poll triumph. Now, a section of Lingayat leaders within the BJP reportedly wants Yeddyurappa at the helm of affairs in the party's state unit.

FACEBOOK DIARY



Bupender Yadav, BJP general secretary in-charge of Bihar, has started a political diary on Facebook. He updates it with 300-word posts every day. Yadav feels real development issues are lost in the chaos of election campaigns. So he started the diary since September 7, focusing only on Bihar's history of social justice.



LIKE FATHER

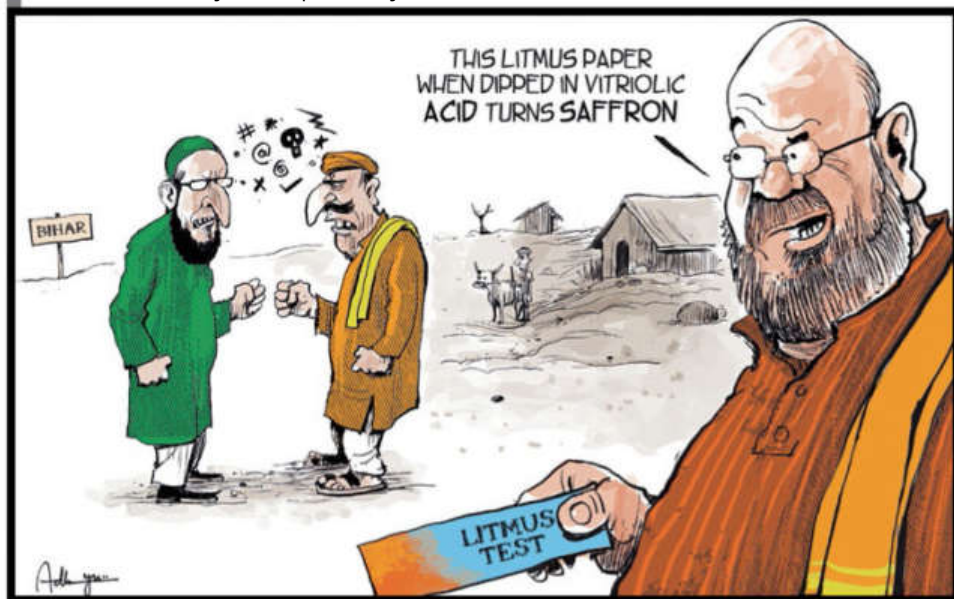
Nara Lokesh is taking the tech route, like his father and Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu, to strengthen the TDP. To create a strong technology base, Lokesh is set to impart technical training to 40,000 workers after interacting with 100,000 members in the next 12 months. He will handpick only those in whom the party can inculcate team work and leadership qualities. Lokesh will consider occupying an official position in the party only after proving his mettle with this mission.

RESTORING ORDER

Andhra Pradesh has decided to retain chapters on Telangana and its stalwarts in school textbooks. Earlier, it had issued an order on August 22, seeking omission of lessons which do not have native content. This included an eulogy on Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, the first CM of the erstwhile Hyderabad state, written by former PM P. V. Narasimha Rao. The SCERT has issued a terse note, saying that "there are no changes in the textbooks from classes V to X".

FREE FOR ALL

by Sandeep Adhwaryu



FALL AT THE FIRST HURDLE

The delay in **Rahul Gandhi's** elevation as Congress president has gladdened some of his party colleagues who have been at the receiving end of the party vice president's ire. Recently, he admonished Congress General Secretary and Assam unit in-charge, C.P. Joshi for failing to prevent 10 Congress MLAs from joining the BJP. Two central leaders and one state veteran were present when Joshi got the tongue-lashing. Earlier, in a meeting at the AICC headquarters, he embarrassed his former aide Kanishka Singh asking loudly how he was doing, making it clear that his erstwhile top adviser's fall from favour was complete. When the Vyapam controversy was at its peak during the monsoon session of Parliament, Rahul had rebuked Madhya Pradesh stalwart Digvijaya Singh in front of senior Congress parliamentarians for not toeing the party line.



YASBANT NEGI



DARTH SIDDHU

Karnataka CM **Siddaramaiah** has earned a new sobriquet—The Dark Lord—on social media after unscheduled power cuts plunged the nation's IT capital into darkness. Siddaramaiah is drawing flak after his government announced five to six hours of daily power cuts every day in Bengaluru. The fact that the CM has not said anything so far has only increased the criticism.

BEEF GRIEF

How the pot is boiling over the ban on cow slaughter

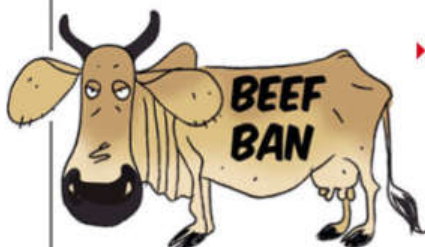


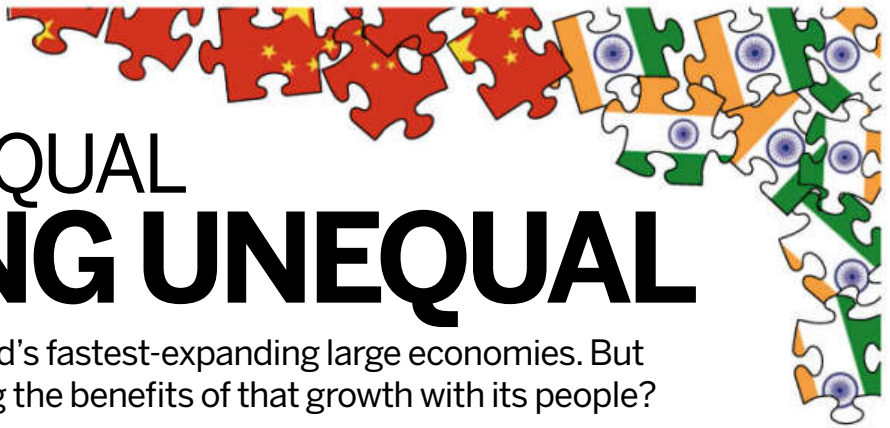
Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

► **Maharashtra**
Bakri Id to be hit by ban on cow slaughter, which has been extended to bulls and bullocks.

► **Jammu & Kashmir**
While the hardline Hurriyat Conference had called for a shutdown on September 12 to protest the ban, BJP's Khurshid Malik hosted a beef party to 'promote religious tolerance' on September 13.

► **Rajasthan**
Muslim groups say Higher Education Minister Kalicharan Saraf plans to sabotage Bakri Id, due on September 25 (which is a holiday), by making blood donation camps mandatory for schools and colleges on that day.

with ANSHUMAN TIWARI, AMITABH SRIVASTAVA, ANANTH KRISHNAN, KAUSHIK DEKA, SANTOSH KUMAR, AMARNATH K. MENON AND ARAVIND GOWDA



GROWING EQUAL SHARING UNEQUAL

India and China are the world's fastest-expanding large economies. But who's been better at sharing the benefits of that growth with its people?





INDIA'S 'MISSION UN' ON TRACK

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Decision 69/560 on September 14 on Security Council (UNSC) reform. Several countries, with China in the forefront, had tried to postpone or modify the decision. Asoke K. Mukerji, India's permanent representative, had to play a leading role in mobilising support and numbers to ensure that the decision would be adopted without any change. In the end, the fact that the UNGA adopted the decision without vote was a victory for democratic functioning.

The UNGA will most likely hold discussions in the first half of November, on the basis of its president's letter and annexes. The significance of the decision lies in the fact that the negotiations henceforth will be conducted on the basis of positions of member states and not on proposals submitted either by the secretary general or any expert body. It will be a 'bottom-up' and not a 'top-down' exercise.

The permanent members took differing positions. France was most supportive in joining the decision for text-based negotiations. Britain too did likewise, although it did not speak in the debate. China was opposed to the idea of text-based negotiations as was Russia. The United States did not speak and disappointed developing countries by its silence. The Chinese opposition too did not go down well.

As is to be expected, there are differences among members about expansion in the permanent category and veto. Nearly everyone supports increase in the non-permanent category. This may be partly due to the frustration among members at the inability of the UNSC to discharge its responsibility in major crisis situations in recent years. There is not much support for extending veto rights to new permanent members. Most members would like to dilute the veto rights of the existing permanent members, 'P5'. Among those who support enlargement, some prefer the UNGA to decide on the names through a secret vote while others favour country-specific enlargement. All these issues will come up for negotiations later this year and will certainly go on for the next few years.

There is a small group of 13 members that calls itself "Uniting for Consensus", which opposes any increase in the permanent category. Its original leader was Italy which did not want Germany to be given a permanent seat. One of its arguments was that if Japan and Germany, Axis

powers during the World War II, can be given permanent seats, Italy was the third member of Axis and should not be denied the same treatment. It seems that China is the new leader of the Uniting for Consensus group. The group proposes a new category as an intermediate solution—of renewable non-permanent seats of 8-10 years' duration—which would be elected by the UNGA. Pakistan is a member of this group; it will have no influence in the final outcome and will certainly not be able to veto India's candidature.

As for India, France was openly and vocally supportive. It mentioned, by name, the G4 countries (Brazil, India, Japan, Germany) in its presentation and even supported extending veto privilege to new permanent members. Britain too supported India's candidature by name, along with that of others in G4, but opposed veto rights for new members. Russia was disappointing. Years ago, it had come out in favour of our aspirations, but gradually chose not to do so. China too voted against India. It was opposed to text-based negotiations, pointing out that there are still wide divergences and that more effort was needed to accommodate concerns and arrive at a consensus. In a transparent effort to curry favour with Africa, it declared priority for representation for Africa.

The United States could have been more forthright, given Barack Obama's statements in Delhi in 2010 and 2015, but it chose to keep quiet. Nevertheless, in its written submission, it did support a "modest" expansion in both categories. More to the point, it stated that the consideration of new permanent members

should be country-specific, thereby making it clear that the slate of new permanent members would be negotiated among members and not be subject to the process of a vote in the UNGA.

An important milestone has no doubt been achieved. China will be a significant obstacle; its principal pre-occupation is with Japan whom it will never agree to joining the privileged club, just as the US will never agree to a package that excludes Japan. China might explain its inability to support India in terms of its difficulty with Japan privately, but we should not be misled by it.

All in all, excellent work by the Permanent Mission of India, the Ministry of External Affairs and the PMO.

Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



An important milestone has no doubt been achieved. China might explain its inability to support India in terms of its difficulty with Japan privately, but we should not be misled by it.

C.R. Gharekhan is former permanent representative and under-secretary-general, United Nations



COVER STORY **DIGITAL ADDICTION**

SMARTPHO

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE LOSING THEMSELVES TO THE VIRTUAL WORLD, SPENDING HOURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB CHATS. EXPERTS SAY IT IS TIME TO TREAT THIS ADDICTION AS A DISORDER.

2IN5

YOUNGSTERS FEEL "ANXIOUS" WITHOUT THEIR SMARTPHONES





THINKSTOCK

WE SLAVES

96%

CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA THE
FIRST THING EVERY MORNING

84%

SWEAR BY APPS AS A FORM
OF ENTERTAINMENT

70%

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT
CHECKING EMAILS

53%

STAY WIRED TO INTERNET
EVERY WAKING HOUR

(Source: Kaspersky Lab survey, 2015; A.T. Kearney Global Research, 2014; Cisco Connected World Technology Report 'Gen Y: New Dawn for work, play, identity', 2012)



PHOTO MONTAGE FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

By Aditi Pai

These days, Abhishek, 22, is on a Tinder high. As in sex, drugs or heavy gymming, happy chemical endorphins start jumping in his brain as soon as he opens the dating app on his mobile. His fingers move in a blur, “swiping right all the time”, to indicate he “likes”, well, a lot of potential matches flooding the screen. In between, the commerce graduate from Delhi’s Khalsa College switches to Facebook or Instagram, checking and tagging posts and photos. Then, “porn takes up another hour”. Finally, he falls asleep by 4 a.m.—tired out from watching *Game of Thrones* online. If there’s some “spare time”, the only child of a real-estate developer from East of Kailash drops in at his father’s office. He’s just a regular dude.

A RISING TRIBE

Or so it seems. Abhishek belongs to a rising tribe of young urban Indians for whom the internet has become “an extension of the brain”. A raft of reports has put out startling stats: two in five young Indians, between ages 18 and 30, feel “anxious, like a part of me is missing” without their smartphones; 96 per cent check social media the first thing every morning; 70 per cent claim they can’t live without checking emails and social media.

That’s not all. In a series of surveys conducted by global IT security solutions firm Kaspersky Lab this year, 73 per cent of the 1,007 young Indians were found to be “digital addicts”, connecting and reconnecting incessantly via every possible digital platform. Just like Abhishek, they spend their waking hours in the virtual world, obsessively playing games, watching videos, scouring news and views, checking e-commerce sites, chatting, retweeting and favoriting on social media. Misplacing a phone is a cause for serious concern for them, shows the study. Last year, a study on 10,000 people from 10 countries by A.T. Kearney Global Research revealed that 53 per cent Indians surveyed were connected to the internet every waking hour, higher than the global average of 51

per cent, with 77 per cent logging on to social networking sites daily.

IT’S AN ADDICTION

The reason why people use digital technology is changing. And along with it, urban relationships. Consider a 28-year-old IIT engineer, living in Lucknow now: a large part of his life is dedicated to building relationships with women in cyberspace. He has had “cyber relationships with over a 100 women” since his days in IIT, when “there were hardly any girls on campus”. Shy and geeky, he couldn’t hold a conversation with the few women he met in real life. Now, the IT professional is so accustomed to forging friendships in a make-believe world that he finds it “impossible” to establish a relationship in real life. “It’s the sign of our times,” says Dr Priyaranjan Avinash, a senior psychiatrist in Varanasi who works with ePsyClinic.com, which offers online psychotherapy. “When gadgets become the focal point of one’s life, eating into work, family life, friendships and leisure, it’s an ‘addiction’, just like any other addiction,” he says.

If holding a gadget makes you euphoric and the absence of it makes you miserable, it’s time to call on the counsellor to check for addiction. In 2014, NIMHANS in Bengaluru gave interesting insights into the tech-addiction age: 3.5 per cent of those seeking treatment were seriously dependent on digital technology. And 11 per cent of addicts were in physical and psychological distress. “People are getting addicted to technology without realising it,” says Dr Manoj Sharma, associate professor of clinical psychology and coordinator at the Service for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) clinic in NIMHANS. “It is a psychological problem which has a physical outcome and can snowball into a societal problem.”

Internet addiction is not yet considered for a clinical diagnosis. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists internet gaming addiction as a condition, not a pathological disorder. But excessive use of internet by young people that takes them away from the “real” world for many more hours than experts consider healthy is a serious concern around

the world. China is the first country to treat internet addiction as a clinical disorder (see accompanying report). A documentary, *Web Junkie*, on a Beijing rehab centre where teenagers are confined for months and put through draconian “deprogramming” therapy, has sent alarm bells ringing globally.

FANTASY OR REALITY?

For the young and impressionable, the virtual world becomes the reality,

CELLULAR J

GLOBAL

150

Number of times we check our phones in 16 hours of awake time

91%

adults keep their smartphones within arm’s reach

90%

text messages get read within 3 minutes of delivery

23

Number of times we send or receive messages daily

22

Number of phone calls we receive or avoid a day

18

Number of times we check time on our phones

Graphic by SAURABH SINGH & SACHIN RUHIL

often with disastrous consequences. Three months ago, Mumbai psychotherapist Seema Hingorrany counselled a 25-year-old who triggered a breakdown in her family by constantly posting details of a family feud on Facebook: from who hurled abuses at whom to who slapped whom. The murky details soon turned into a family drama online. Excited with the attention she got from Facebook friends, the patient obsessively checked comments

and 'likes', feeling happy each time people—even strangers—empathised with her. "She felt emotionally disconnected from her family. Suddenly, virtual strangers became her support system," says Hingorrany.

With a rising number of cases of gadget addiction pouring into counselors' chambers, mental health experts are coining such terms to describe behavioural changes that come with excessive gadget use. A number of

youngsters are reporting disorders such as Selfitis and Vibrating Phone Syndrome (see graphic on next page). Chaitali Sinha, 24, a Mumbai-based lawyer, was told that she has selfitis or self-obsessed narcissism when she spent hours locked in her bedroom clicking and posting 50 selfies a day. It was only when she was asked to resign from work for poor attendance that her parents took her to a counsellor. "I get a high when I get lots of likes for my pictures. I work out hard to maintain my body," she says. During counseling, she realised that her obsession stemmed from a poor body image that she had suffered from since childhood.

Be it attention or social acceptance or just a burning desire to get a peek into people's lives, FOMO or the Fear of Missing Out is gripping a large number of tech addicts. "That beep on the phone, and we immediately take the phone and then the cycle of forwarding jokes, chatting, replying to messages (*sic*). It just continues," says Geetanjali Kumar, a Delhi-based psychologist. Chartered accountant Shailesh Gandhi, 36, "gets a sense of thrill" each time he forwards a message on WhatsApp. It could be about an airplane crash in another country or updates on rainfall in Mumbai. "It's fun to share the latest news, everyone likes to be in the know," he says. Minutes after news of APJ Abdul Kalam's death spread, Gandhi downloaded images of the former president from the internet and posted them on his WhatsApp groups. "People feel important when others appreciate them for sharing news, whether or not it's true or worthwhile," says Janki Mehta, psychotherapist and co-founder of Mumbai-based Mind Mandala.

Addiction to online gaming, or Internet Gaming Syndrome, is another area of concern. An engineering student walked into Mumbai psychiatrist Dr Kersi Chavda's chamber two years ago, asking for help to wean him off games. A bright student, he was sent on long leave by the United States University because he spent 50 hours at a stretch playing games. Similarly, Manish Mehta, 20, a student of physics at Pune University, opted for a 'break year' because he "didn't find the time

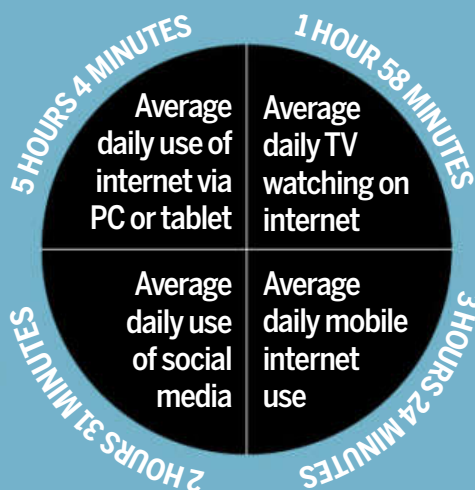
AILS

RESEARCH SHOWS HOW DEEP OUR ATTACHMENT TO SMARTPHONES RUNS

INDIA

978 MILLION

mobile and 140 million smartphone connections, with 243 million active internet and 118 million social media users in India



- 22% use smartphones in the loo
- 84% take their phones to bed
- 56% check phones during meals
- 15% admit that they text while driving
- 60% use phones mostly for games and entertainment
- 33% use them mostly for work
- 55% watch videos every day

40%
IT professionals in India surveyed say they check their online profiles every 10 minutes

87%
young Indians believe that people have different online and offline identities

(Source: Cisco Visual Networking Index global mobile data traffic forecast, 2014-2019; We are Social's 'Digital, Social and Mobile 2015' report; BI Intelligence; IAMAI; Nielsen; Research by Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business in 2012-13; Morgan Stanley 2012 reports; ImpigeMobileStrategy.com, 2011)

93%
digital Indians willing to share personal data with stores and e-commerce sites for a deal or discount.
Globally it's **50%**

FOMO

WANT TO BE THE FIRST TO READ, SHARE AND COMMENT? IT'S THE FEAR OF MISSING OUT.

**FAD**

IF YOU OBSESSIVELY POST PICTURES AND EAGERLY AWAIT POSTS FROM YOUR FRIENDS ON NETWORKING SITES, YOU COULD BE SUFFERING FROM THE FACEBOOK ADDICTION DISORDER.

SELFITIS

CLICK MORE THAN FIVE SELFIES A DAY, AND YOU ARE A VICTIM OF SELFITIS, AN OBSESSION WITH CLICKING SELFIES.



DECODING DIGITAL DISORDERS

YOU GET PSYCHED IF YOU MISS A FACEBOOK UPDATE, YOUR FRIENDS EXIST ONLY ONLINE AND YOU OBSESS ABOUT SELFIES—THESE ARE TELL-TALE SIGNS OF A DISORDER

INTERNET ADDICTION DISORDER

WHEN YOUR ROUTINE DAY IS ALL ABOUT SPENDING WAKING HOURS IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD. EVEN CATCHING UP WITH FRIENDS IS DONE THROUGH WEB CHATS AND MESSENGERS, WITH LITTLE OFFLINE ACTIVITY.

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

YOU HAVE AN OVERPOWERING URGE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA ALL THROUGH THE DAY, CONSTANTLY CHECKING UPDATES.

PHANTOM VIBRATION SYNDROME

YOUR PHONE'S NOT AROUND BUT YOU FEEL YOU CAN HEAR IT RING OR VIBRATE. THE TERM MADE POPULAR BY THE DILBERT COMIC STRIP IS USED FOR THOSE WHO ARE EXTREMELY ATTACHED TO THEIR PHONES.

**GAME ADDICTION**

WHEN PLAYING GAMES MEAN CANDY CRUSH AND CRIMINAL CASE OR ONLINE FIFA. THE PLAY-TIME STRETCHES INTO HOURS.

**DIGITAL POUTING**

DON'T WANT TO TALK TO PARENTS ABOUT THE REPORT CARD? MOST TECH-SAVVY CHILDREN PLUG IN THEIR EARPHONES AND PLAY GAMES ON GADGETS TO AVOID CONFLICT.



to study” after playing football and tennis with other gamers from around the world. “I used to play through the night because my teammates were usually from the US,” he says.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

The symptoms are clear, say doctors: when the user compromises on work and leisure activities to spend time on the smartphone, it marks the beginning of addiction. Sameer Mehrotra, 38, was put on a diet of Ludo and tennis to wean him off virtual gaming which was threatening to tear his marriage apart. The Mumbai businessman’s children were roped in to play outdoors with him while his phone was left at home. After a few days of anxiety pangs when he stayed without his phone for even 15 minutes, Mehrotra now rations his phone use.

Dr Purnima Nagaraja, consulting psychiatrist at Dhrithi Psychiatric Care in Hyderabad, says: “Heavily addicted people can’t make eye contact while talking. Emotional blunting is another concern, wherein youngsters would rather use only emoticons to express their emotions.” Six months ago, she counselled a 17-year-old who had three cell phones and 13 accounts on Facebook which he used to chat with various people using different identities. An only child, he was lonely at home but found a whole world of virtual relationships to lose himself into. His parents took him to a doctor when he attacked them and inflicted injuries on himself each time they tried to take the phone away. Even younger children, who spend long hours playing online, show signs of mood changes and anxiety. Mother to a nine-year-old, Mumbai-based dentist Dr Nupur Jhunjhunwala says that her son is irritable after two hours of online games. “Everything is so fast-paced in online games. When the real world can’t match the same pace and action, he gets anxious and upset,” she says.

Smita Pradhan, 38, of Mumbai was diagnosed with clinical depression when she decided to walk out of home. A few sessions of psychotherapy revealed that the homemaker suffered from anxiety and low self-esteem fuelled by her obsession with

networking sites. “Her appreciation of relationships was measured by likes and comments on her photos on Facebook. That’s why she believed that her husband and children, who weren’t on Facebook, hated her,” says psychotherapist Gitanjali Murgai who is counselling her.

HIDDEN CRAVINGS

Sociologists blame tech addiction on new-age urban living: the breakdown of large family systems, a dearth of real offline relationships and the desire for an aspirational lifestyle. “Humans hold the desire to be popular and the numbers you can get online are far more than in real life where you have to nurture relationships,” says Sushila Choudhary, a Pune University sociology graduate, who is researching on the growing dependence on social media.

Experts link tech addiction to other personality disorders such as low self-esteem and a desire to be accepted. For most, the virtual world is a bed of roses without the thorns that come with real life. Air-brushed pictures on Instagram, albums of exotic holidays, comments and likes from friends are all about a picture-perfect life. “People can have a completely new identity on social media and feel good to see comments on what they are writing. But it is so momentary that they keep going back online for this constant boost to their self-esteem,” says Janki Mehta.

MIND-BODY CONNECT

In January 2012, the Shanghai Mental Health Center in China conducted a study which showed that internet addiction can cause neurological changes similar to those with alcohol and cocaine dependency. “It leads to problems with dexterity and adversely impacts mind-body coordination. I’ve also seen patients complaining of physical pain and low bone density,” says Murgai. Wedding planner Akshata Rao, 27, had to undergo physiotherapy when she experienced uncontrollable pain and twitching of fingers. “It was because of constant texting. I’d text for more than 16 hours a day,” she says.

Another common complaint is pain in the neck, hand and fingers which is a result of repetitive strain injury—when

the same muscles get worked because of poor posture or frequent texting. Says Dr Anand Kumar, professor and head of the neurology department at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi: “Constant exposure to electromagnetic radiation interferes with cognitive memory and sleep. The heat generated from the gadget irritates the surface tissues of the skin. We have no concrete evidence yet to link tumours to mobile radiation.”

A DIGITAL DRUG

Human penchant for addiction goes back to antiquity. Alcohol addiction was responsible for Alexander the Great’s death in 323 BC. *Hashish* (cannabis) addiction spread across the world from Islamic cultures. Opium addiction among the Chinese had triggered the Opium Wars of 19th century. Nicotine and caffeine addictions shape our urban landscapes and social interactions today.

This is the first time experts are dealing with something that cannot be ingested, smoked or consumed and where bodily harm is not the prime issue. Digital addiction plays with the mind. Yet it involves the same symptoms, says Dr Harish Shetty, social psychiatrist at Mumbai’s Dr L.H. Hiranandani Hospital. Like any other form of addiction, people suffering from internet addiction show a loss of control over behaviour, they lie about excessive use, steal money or show manipulative behaviour, exhibit euphoria-followed-by-anxiety paradigm, panic, physical distress and extreme isolation when taken off gadgets. “It’s like a drug, but it is digital,” says Mehta. “It can make people numb, increase uncontrollable cravings and interfere with the brain’s functioning. If you don’t get restful sleep, it affects your digestive system and causes neurological changes in the long run.”

Not surprisingly, tech addicts often show signs of addiction to other substances as well. “Any addiction is about filling a void within. So it’s easy to get addicted to multiple things at the same time,” says Mehta. At Shetty’s clinic, most tech addicts come with what he calls the “drugs, games and porn disorder”—patients addicted to all three

JUNKIE JUNCTION

CHINA, HOME TO 40 MILLION INTERNET ADDICTS, IS WITNESSING A SURGE OF MILITARY-STYLE BOOT CAMPS TO FIGHT THE PROBLEM WITH A RANGE OF WAYS, INCLUDING ELECTRIC SHOCKS

By Ananth Krishnan in Beijing |

Tao Ran recalls that it all began in the long summer of 2003. China was just getting back on its feet after a dreadful few months combating the spread of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), when cities including Beijing completely shut down and resembled ghost towns. The months of lockdown meant an extended break for Beijing's school students, many of who stayed home for as long as half a year without attending classes. But when schools began to open in August, many teachers found that their classrooms weren't full.

"Some students had stopped coming to classes," says Tao, a leading psychiatrist who was at the time working with the People's Liberation Army Mental Health Advising Centre, and treating alcoholics and drug addicts. "When we began to dig deeper, we found that many were going to internet bars instead of school." During that summer, Tao says, hundreds of young Chinese who had spent their days in gaming rooms online had become hooked—China's first generation of internet addicts.

"We estimate there are 40 million internet addicts in China today," says Tao, speaking to INDIA TODAY in his office at the Beijing Shijian Integrated Medicine Science Institute which studies internet addiction. Alarmed by the spread of internet addiction following SARS, Tao, a stocky and sprightly doctor who hasn't lost any of his military demeanour, got the government's support in setting up China's first Internet Addiction Treatment

Centre in Daxing, a Beijing suburb. Tao's centre resembles more a military bootcamp than a hospital—its sprawling facility includes dormitories, basketball courts and PLA-style training courses.

The centre has treated hundreds of young internet addicts. Most, Tao says, were students who were spending hours every day—from at least six to more than 18—lost in the virtual worlds of online role-playing games such as World of Warcraft and League of Legends—arguably the two most popular games in China. "These were children, many in boarding schools away from their

within families. Some students had turned to the solace of the virtual world because of unresolved problems at home.

Some camps in China, Tao says, follow more extreme approaches. This, he says, is a cause for concern. The proliferation of boot camps to counter spreading internet addiction has led to an unregulated industry. Some have liberally deployed electric shock therapies which, Tao says, should only be used in rare cases. Last year, one 19-year-old girl was beaten to death, allegedly by boot camp teachers. The Daxing camp has an "80 to 85 per cent" success rate, says Tao. But

there are no guarantees. One student took close to two years to be cured after relapsing several times.

Tao says his methods have been pioneering. It was one report of his that prompted China to label internet addiction as a clinical disorder—the first country to do so. His centre has received students from

Japan, South Korea and Australia. Tao says he's ready to share his methods with India, and his message to Indian authorities is that addiction is a problem that cannot be ignored. "If you are having a young generation with values shaped by a virtual reality without laws, without responsibility, without morals, this is dangerous." In China, he points out there have been several instances of young addicts turning to crime to pay for their addiction. The roots of the problem may lie in the virtual world, but its social impact is certainly real.

Follow the writer on Twitter @[ananthkrishnan](#)



AN INTERNET ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE IN CHINA

parents, who would not play sports or socialise, and even climb the walls of school to get away in search of internet bars," he says.

The treatments at Tao's centre range from a minimum of three months to as long as one year. The course, he says, is half-physical and half-mental. His approach is different from the West where "the focus is on drugs". "We believe in finding the root of the problem," he says. The exercises and healthy diets are aimed at addressing health problems that are commonplace in addicts. The mental aspect involves counselling and addressing problems

SWITCH IT OFF

What counsellors suggest to wean addicts off gadgets and the internet

GADGET HYGIENE

When it's bedtime, say good night to your gadgets. Keep your phones and tabs away, far from your bedroom.

INTERNET DIARY

If you want to cut down on your online time, keep a diary of your activities—offline and online. Consciously reduce your internet use and engage in other activities.

DIGITAL DETOX

During weekends or vacations, switch off notifications for all apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook and go back to using the phone like in the good old days—only to make calls.

at the same time. Kersi Chavda says: "Theories on 'addictive personality' exist but these haven't been proven about digital addiction yet. Some have linked it to depression or borderline personality disorders, but nothing has been authenticated."

QUEST FOR CURE

Internet rehabilitation centres are coming up in India too. The SHUT clinic, which opened in 2014, pioneered the movement of digital or internet detox with centres that help obsessive users of technology reduce dependence on the phone. Seeing that a number of young children were addicted to their phones and chat messengers, Delhi-based NGO Uday Foundation set up the Centre for Children in Internet and Technology Distress in July last year to wean them off excessive digital use.

"Like any addiction, people can show signs of anxiety and other withdrawal symptoms including violence, so regular counselling and a strict weaning-off programme is needed,"

says Shetty, who conducts internet de-addiction workshops and counselling programmes across Mumbai.

Experts are coining new terms to wean people off technology dependency. Take a gadgets-free holiday, like what actor Imran Khan recently did, or simply renegotiate online time.

Experts also notice that younger children and teenagers too suffer withdrawal symptoms and separation anxiety when phones and tablets are taken away from them. A 13-year-old Mumbai boy had to be hospitalised after he attacked his parents only because "they took the phone—my life—away". Counsellors urge people to tweak their parenting skills in the digital age by monitoring gadget time and putting family time on the must-do chart. Schools, too, are waking up to the need for a digital diet for students by banning phones on campus. "Parents compete with each other by giving their kids the latest phones in the market. They fuel this obsession in children at a young age," says Rupali Vidvans,

a mother of two teenage sons and a teacher at a suburban school in Mumbai.

NO EASY SOLUTIONS

There's no quick-fix solution. Going gadget-less isn't always feasible. And people often slip into their old digital routine after a spell of abstinence. The new buzzword is "digital hygiene": "create a corner for your gadgets when you go to sleep, throw the television remote and mobile phone out of the bedroom," says Shetty. But, like every other new-age detox routine, new frills are being added to turn 'digital detox' into an experiential marketing platform the world over.

Detox camps and holidays are being advertised; wellness retreats with gadget detox packages are coming up; hotels are setting new rules of gadgetry engagement; 'Detox Yoga' is being offered, with a touch of back-to-nature energy healing experience. Workplaces, too, are laying down norms with tech-free spaces and no-gadget work time and urging employees to reclaim their weekend time.

BLURRING LINES

In the meantime, Abhishek stays glued to his obsession with his handheld device. Going by research and the rule of averages, he is checking his phone at least 150 times in the 16 hours he stays awake; making, receiving or avoiding 22 calls a day; sending or getting 23 messages daily; checking time on his phone 18 times a day. And like 978 million mobile phone owners in India, he may not even be aware that the line is blurring between where he can carry his phone and where he can't: the loo, the bed, the dinner table, and using it while driving.

If he's reading this story, here's hoping it'll convince him to go off the grid, wake up to other joys of life. And smell the coffee.

(All names of case studies have been changed to protect privacy.)

with Mona Ramavat, Maroosha Muzaffar,

Moeena Halim and Durba Ghosh

Follow the writer on Twitter @aditi12p



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#DigitalJunkies

MUFTI'S STRUGGLE TO DELIVER

Six months into his job, CM Mufti Sayeed is boxed in by the containment politics of his ally BJP as popular resentment grows at promises belied

By Asit Jolly and Naseer Ganai

On September 7 morning, a full year after large areas of the Kashmir valley were deluged by an unforgiving Jhelum wrecking more misery on a people already devastated by long decades of insurgency, Srinagar's Lal Chowk stood almost as desolate as it did, completely inundated, on the day. There was no flood this time, but overflowing public resentment at the failure of the six-month-old People's Democratic Party (PDP)-BJP government to bring relief to thousands of victims of 2014's calamitous September ensured that Lal Chowk remained completely locked down like the rest of the city.

Anger over delayed flood relief, expressed through downed shutters and sporadic, slogan-shouting protests that were quickly beaten back by riot-ready policemen on September 7, is however only part of a wider disillusionment driven by failed expectations.

"*Hum itihaas ko badalna chahte hain* (We want to change history)," Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had

proclaimed on March 1, the day he took office as CM of what many described as an antithetical coalition with the BJP. Much of his confidence was premised on an "Agenda of the Alliance", drafted by Sayeed's Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu and BJP General Secretary Ram Madhav. Both partners agreed to step back on contentious election-time rhetoric such as the BJP's position on revocation of Article 370 and PDP's calls for repealing the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, greater autonomy and "self rule".

The 16-page document held out a plethora of promises—dialogue with all internal stakeholders including the separatist Hurriyat factions; rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits who fled the Valley in the face of rising violence after 1989, refugees from West Pakistan and families who migrated from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK); a proactive, 'smart' government; a new Transparency Commission to end corruption; and a fine balance between economic development and addressing the socio-political aspirations of people in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. All this, in Sayeed's own words, would

"historically bridge the deep divide between Srinagar and Jammu".

Signalling his intent to restart his engagement with Narendra Modi from where he had left off with Atal Bihari Vajpayee when the BJP lost power in Delhi in 2004, Sayeed unhesitatingly pushed the boundaries of the mutually agreed agenda. Drawing parallels between 'Insaniyat, Jamhooriat, Kashmiriyat' enunciated by Vajpayee and Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' slogan, the Chief Minister even spoke of "soft borders, free trans-LoC travel and trade, cultural and academic exchanges with PoK" as "processes that (will) lead to self-rule".

But just six months of the new government has made it painfully evident to Sayeed that the BJP under Modi isn't willing to permit him the free hand that Vajpayee had allowed.

Barely seven days after the PDP-BJP coalition was sworn in, the ideological divide between the partners struck an untimely crescendo. This following the release, on March 7, of Masarat Alam, a long-incarcerated Hurriyat functionary and alleged instigator of the 2010 stone-pelting demonstrations

MUFTI SAYEED'S UNKEPT PROMISES

Assuming office riding on great expectations, the Chief Minister is yet to deliver

1 SMART, TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT
No movement on the promised Transparency Commission or an independent RTI organisation

2 SUSTAINED DIALOGUE WITH ALL INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
Hurriyat leaders under house arrest; Syed Ali Shah Geelani under detention since April

3 REHABILITATION OF REFUGEES
No agreement on rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, refugees from PoK or West Pakistan migrants



Photographs by Abid Bhat

CM MUFTI MOHAMMAD
SAYEED WITH HIS DAUGHTER
MEHBOOBA MUFTI

**4 DENOTIFICATION
OF 'DISTURBED
AREAS' AHEAD
OF AFSPA
ROLLBACK**
Nothing done; terror
incidents rising

**5 STATUS QUO ON
CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS
PERTAINING TO J&K**
BJP silent on Article 370 but
General Secretary Ram Madhav
says party will pursue Syama
Prasad Mookerjee's ideology of
integrating Kashmir fully

**6 GENEROUS CENTRAL FUNDING
FOR FLOOD REHABILITATION
AND ECONOMIC REVIVAL**
No funds released by the Centre;
victims of September 2014
floods shut down Valley on
September 7; no flood
protection work undertaken

**7 BRIDGING DIVIDE
BETWEEN JAMMU
AND SRINAGAR**
Differences have
sharpened; no
consensus on
location of new
AIIMS or Smart City

THE BIG STORY JAMMU & KASHMIR

that ended with the death of more than 100 Kashmiri youths in police firing. While Alam was rearrested on April 17 and once again detained under J&K's controversial Public Safety Act (PSA) after he took to leading demonstrations where youths waved Pakistan flags, the BJP leadership used the episode to clip Sayeed's wings. Forest and Environment Minister Bali Bhagat of the BJP is not shy about acknowledging that "somebody senior" from Delhi gave Mufti a talking to. "It's taken a few months but things are now under control," he says.

It had its intended impact. When Alam was again released, on September 2, from Jammu's Kot Balwal jail following a high court order, a police posse whisked the man off, later invoking fresh charges under the PSA to detain him indefinitely. There hasn't been a peep out of Sayeed and PDP leaders who had so vociferously defended the earlier decision to free Alam only six months earlier.

Also, unlike in neighbouring Punjab where both Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and Deputy CM Sukhbir Badal successfully blocked the Centre's attempts to hand investigation of the July 27 Dinanagar terror attack to the National Investigating Agency (NIA), the Union home ministry chose not to observe niceties and unilaterally despatched NIA officers to assume charge of probes into similar incidents involving Pakistani terrorists in Udhampur and the Valley. "The CM was merely informed of the decision, never asked for his consent," says a senior state police officer in Srinagar. There is also a big buzz about the NIA's plans to establish field offices reportedly at four locations in J&K.

Besides the Alam affair, the CM's subsequent attempts to go easy on the separatist leadership were summarily blocked. He was forced to reverse his orders releasing them to meet Sartaj Aziz ahead of the national security adviser talks between India and Pakistan in August.

"Mufti Sayeed is a disappointment," says Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the 'moderate' Hurriyat leader who

has been placed under 'house arrest' and confined to his family home located off the scenic Nagin lake. "Nothing has changed with the new government. New Delhi, evidently, still controls things in the Valley," he adds. Geelani, the very man he had so assiduously argued to liberate during his last tenure as CM (2002-2005), has also spent five of the six months of Sayeed's current term under detention. Well into his 80s, Geelani accuses the Chief Minister of leading a "crack-down" against the Hurriyat leadership in place of the promised reconciliation.

The sentiments are widely echoed across Kashmir also amid leaders of the ruling PDP who had visions of Sayeed calling the shots just as he had so deftly managed to do in 2002. As chief minister in a three-year swap agreement with the Congress party, Sayeed remained in complete control, unafraid of confronting Delhi's emissary, the then governor Lt Gen S.K. Sinha on issues pertaining to the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB). But also sensing a historic opportunity, he avidly championed the peace process Vajpayee initiated with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. Politically, Sayeed astutely positioned his PDP as a bridge between mainstream politics and the separatists, appropriating benefits from both ends of the spectrum.

"This is not the Mufti of 2002," says a former J&K Police officer. "This is a man who is not in the best health and now clearly prepared to compromise to hold on to power," he adds.

Looking for 'positives' in the six-month-old coalition, Naeem Akhtar, among Sayeed's closest confidants and the incumbent education minister, takes a measure of respite in the

**SAYEED'S MINISTERS ARE
RELUCTANT TO SPEAK OUT
BUT PRIVATELY, EVERY ONE
OF THEM INSISTS THE REAL
BANE HAS BEEN DELHI'S
RELUCTANCE IN RELEASING
FINANCES TO J&K.**



fact that mutually contentious issues are no longer in the foreground of the discourse. But although the huge row over the BJP's controversial proposal to resettle displaced Kashmiri Pandit families in separate, 'secure' enclaves in the Valley may have died down, it has also meant that the coalition's key promise of resolving the refugee issue, including migrants from PoK and West Pakistan refugees, is back to where it was: on the low-flame-burner.

Likewise, Sayeed's promise to end corruption through 'smart government' is little more than the smart phrase it started as. His promise of establishing a new Transparency Commission alongside an independent organisation giving citizens never-before access under the Right to Information Act is a non-starter.

Forest Minister Bhagat, albeit to showcase his own efficiency, happily narrates stories about how "senior PDP ministers have been lobbying on behalf of real estate mafias" in attempts to get him to go slow on his ongoing campaign to free J&K's forests of encroachers. And even though he's not pointing fingers at the education minister, a senior PDP functionary insists "money still changes hands for



BJP SUPPORTERS IN SRINAGAR

the transfer of schoolteachers”.

Sayeed's ministers are reluctant to speak out for fear of fanning fresh controversy but privately, every one of them insists the real bane has been Delhi's reluctance in releasing finances to J&K including the flood relief package that was specifically written into the Agenda of the Alliance. They point out that the promise of liberal developmental and infrastructure funding from the Centre was in fact a key factor that tipped scales within the PDP rank and file in favour of allying with the BJP despite inherent ideological contradictions.

Akhtar's own education department has been struggling to come up with the money to pay 18 months in back salaries to 50,000-plus schoolteachers. "I am not complaining but the Centre hasn't chipped in as yet," he says. Infrastructure-building is similarly affected. After waiting months for finances from Delhi, Roads Minister Altaf Bukhari was reportedly forced to borrow Rs 400 crore from J&K Bank to begin work to resurface the Valley's flood-ravaged road network.

The BJP's Sangathan Mantri for J&K, Ashok Koul, a former RSS pracharak, interestingly, cites "corruption

in the state government" and "improper end-utilisation of central funds" to explain the delay from Delhi. Koul says a substantial economic package will soon be announced for the state, but that "the Modi government wants to minimise corruption and ensure that this time, the money is properly apportioned between the Valley, Jammu and the Ladakh Region."

Both BJP and PDP men, somewhat myopically, continue to champion individual political constituencies: for instance, the Centre's proposal to set up an AIIMS (All India Institute for Medical Sciences) this June promptly provoked a furious public spat over whether the facility should be located in Jammu or Srinagar, leaving Sayeed unable to take a call. There is similar paralysis on something as mundane as sending in a recommendation for inclusion in the PM's list of 100 Smart Cities—Srinagar or Jammu?

The latest standoff centres around Drabu's decision to impose a new 12 per cent service tax on Hindu pilgrims using the helicopter service to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu. Deputy CM Nirmal Singh demanded

an immediate rollback. More strident voices within J&K's saffron fold accused the finance minister of imposing "jazia". Refusing to back down for once, Draburetorted that the BJP ought to get the shrine board to reduce the Rs 300 landing fees it charges pilgrims.

Left with hardly any room to manoeuvre vis-à-vis his stated political line, there are clear signs that Sayeed could soon be even further hemmed in with serious challenges within his own brood. On August 9, PDP's Baramulla MP Muzaffar Baig stayed away from a key meeting of the PDP-BJP coordination committee. A founding member of the party alongside Sayeed, Baig has clearly been feeling shortchanged at being abruptly excluded from talks with the BJP ahead of the coalition's formation in March. "The coordination committee has been reduced to a sham," he says.

But insiders say Baig's angst really stems from a not-too-well Sayeed's moves to bring his daughter and PDP President Mehbooba Mufti centre stage, perhaps even trying to replace himself as the CM. Sayeed is clearly the glue that has been holding the PDP together and besides Baig, scores of others are equally unhappy at the prospect of Mehbooba taking his place.

In all this, Sayeed and Mehbooba have both chosen to speak within the 'safety' of governmental or party forums. "We hope the central government would help the state government revive the process of economic rejuvenation in J&K through an adequate financial package," Mehbooba told a convention of PDP workers in Pulwama on September 9. While the daughter still seems to be making a pitch, the father seems somewhat resigned: "It is not in my nature to fight. I don't like to win fights and lose friends," Sayeed said in Kokernag on September 4.

With the winter chill already threatening to set in, common people in the Valley too are growing more disillusioned with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed every passing day. Perhaps, as the Mirwaiz puts it: "Yet another generation of Kashmiris seem doomed to live with a sense of being under siege."

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By Amitabh Srivastava

It is a tad acerbic but the analogy arguably held: Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar wanted to make a Manmohan Singh out of Mulayam Singh Yadav in Bihar, a titular head without any real authority. Everything going on in the “grand secular alliance” in poll-bound Bihar was in the name of “Netaji”, the figurehead of the Janata Parivar. When Lalu and Nitish proceeded on August 12 to keep 100 seats for their respective parties, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Janata Dal (United), offered 40 to the Congress, and left nothing for Mulayam’s Samajwadi Party (SP), they had their defence ready—“All our seats belong to Netaji”.

Truth be told, the SP, a political heavyweight in Uttar Pradesh, has always been a fringe player in adjoining Bihar’s pollscape. But the non-playing captain’s decision on September 3 that he’d had enough and would walk out of the alliance gives Mulayam a disproportionate importance in this high-stakes election, a straight fight between the BJP-led NDA and the Nitish-Lalu-Congress combine billed as the biggest anti-BJP alliance mounted since the Narendra Modi juggernaut rolled into power at the Centre. For one, the sheen is off the “grand secular alliance” with the exit of ‘Maulana Mulayam’—the SP chief himself launched a broadside at Nitish on September 8: “Who is secular? People who ran the government with the BJP’s support for eight years? They are secular all of a sudden?” Secondly, the SP might even draw a blank come results day but it could play spoiler to the hilt for Nitish and Lalu if it bags anywhere near the number of votes that it did a decade ago.

The party is launching its formal campaign in Bihar on September 22 with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav set to preside over a ‘Milan Samaroh’ in Patna. Although Mulayam initially pulled out of the Janata alliance promising to contest all seats in Bihar, moves are afoot to string together an alliance of the marginal players. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which too was sulking

MULAYAM EYES BIHAR’S M-Y PIE

Bit player Samajwadi Party ditches Janata Parivar in a bid to retain political relevance. Advantage NDA?



SAFFRON SURGE

THE INDIA TODAY GROUP-CICERO BIHAR PRE-POLL WAVE-1 SURVEY PRED

	VOTE PROJECTION		SWING	SEAT FO
	2010	2015		2010
JD(U)+	49.8	40	-9.8	141
BJP+	23.2	42	18.8	94
OTHERS	27	18	-9	8

*JD(U)+includes JD(U), RJD and INC **BJP+ includes BJP, LJP, RLSP and HAM ***Vote projections and

after Lalu-Nitish offered it just three seats to contest, is already on board with the SP, with sources confirming that Mulayam was toying with the idea of projecting Tariq Anwar, the NCP Lok Sabha MP from Katihar, as the chief ministerial face—a move that might somewhat dent Nitish-Lalu's hopes of pocketing a chunk of the Muslim vote. SP's Bihar in-charge and National General Secretary Kiranmoy Nanda has also indicated that Pappu Yadav of the Jan Adhikar Party, a big Lalu



(FROM LEFT) SHARAD YADAV, LALU PRASAD YADAV AND MULAYAM SINGH YADAV IN DELHI ON SEPTEMBER 4

GETTY IMAGES

baiter, may also join the alliance. The SP also expects RJD and JD(U) leaders who lose out during ticket distribution to flock to its camp.

Beginning 2000, the SP has contested over 100 seats in each of the four assembly polls held in Bihar. The party registered its best showing in February 2005 when it bagged four seats, although its legislative bench strength was reduced to two seats within eight months after Bihar witnessed another round of assembly polls in October 2005. Besides picking up seats, the SP also bagged more than 2 per cent votes in the two elections, although the vote share was sub-2 per cent in the election preceding those (2000) and the one after (2010), in both of which the party drew a blank seat-wise.

The NCP, on the other hand, had contested 31 and bagged three seats in the February 2005 assembly polls with 7.1 per cent votes in seats it contested, amounting to around 1 per cent of the overall vote share. In October 2005, the NCP contested just eight seats, could win just one but bagged 21.68 per cent votes in the seats it contested although its overall vote percentage was less than 1 per cent. In 2010, although the NCP failed to win any seat in an election the Nitish-led NDA won by a landslide, it took its vote share to 2.58 per cent.

Even when Bihar witnessed fiercely contested triangular contests in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls in Bihar, the victory margin in over 9,000 booths—or 15 per cent of the booths—was around 50 votes. If the numbers stack up the

ICTS AN NDA WIN

RECAST	LOSS/GAIN
2015	
106	-35
125	31
12	4

swing in percentage

THE SP'S EXIT IS

LIKELY TO HIT THE NITISH-LALU COMBINE HARD, CONSIDERING THE VICTORY MARGIN IN 15 PER CENT OF THE BOOTHS DURING THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS WAS 50-ODD VOTES.

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THE MAHA DALIT WAR

For Team NDA's Ram Vilas Paswan and Jitan Ram Manjhi, a lot rides on their individual scores



PRAVEEN NEGI

(FROM RIGHT) NDA ALLIES RAM VILAS PASWAN, AMIT SHAH AND JITAN RAM MANJHI

The smiles on their faces after senior partner BJP managed to hammer out a seat-sharing arrangement on September are misleading: the battle for who among the two is Bihar's tallest Dalit leader is likely to rage between Ram Vilas Paswan and Jitan Ram Manjhi well beyond the assembly elections.

Manjhi only grudgingly relented after BJP President Amit Shah

allocated his Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) only 20 seats as opposed to 40 for Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), with the BJP keeping 160 seats for itself and 23 for Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Samta Party.

If former CM and Mahadalit leader Manjhi's short-term ambition is to punish CM Nitish Kumar for unseating him, his longer-term rival

is nine-term MP Paswan. The LJP chief was already nicely ensconced in the NDA, joining it ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, reaping a rich electoral dividend of six out of seven seats contested, and Paswan himself securing a Union cabinet berth, when Manjhi came calling from the JD(U). The latter's rather abrupt emergence as a Dalit leader and his subsequent alliance with the BJP has severely undermined the Union minister's bargaining chip as the solitary Dalit icon in the NDA. Worse still, Manjhi is tipped to join the Union cabinet after the assembly polls.

If this happens, Manjhi's elevation will literally bring him on a par with Paswan, a man who began his career as an MLA in 1969 and has displayed a singular knack of punching above his weight in both state and central politics over the decades.

In this same-side battle of one-upmanship, the Bihar results will prove decisive. Paswan has proven credentials of being a politician with a transferable vote bank. For Manjhi, it will be electoral baptism by fire.

by Amitabh Srivastava

same way in what is expected to be an even more fiercely fought election, the in-the-works SP-NCP-Pappu Yadav formation, with a political constituency similar to the truncated Janata Parivar's, poses a threat to Lalu-Nitish's bid to keep the NDA at bay.

Beyond the immediacy of the assembly elections, however, there is a more compelling reason for Mulayam's exit, and that is to retain political relevance for the SP in Bihar. Son Akhilesh is said to be willing to measure SP's cadre and operational strength by treating the Bihar polls as a dry run before the 2017 assembly polls at home. But more importantly, he wants to expand his party's

footprint in a state whose current social justice champions, Lalu, 67, and Nitish, 64, are expected to hang their boots in the years to come. The SP's core vote bank of Muslims and Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh is identical to what Lalu has in Bihar, and with no

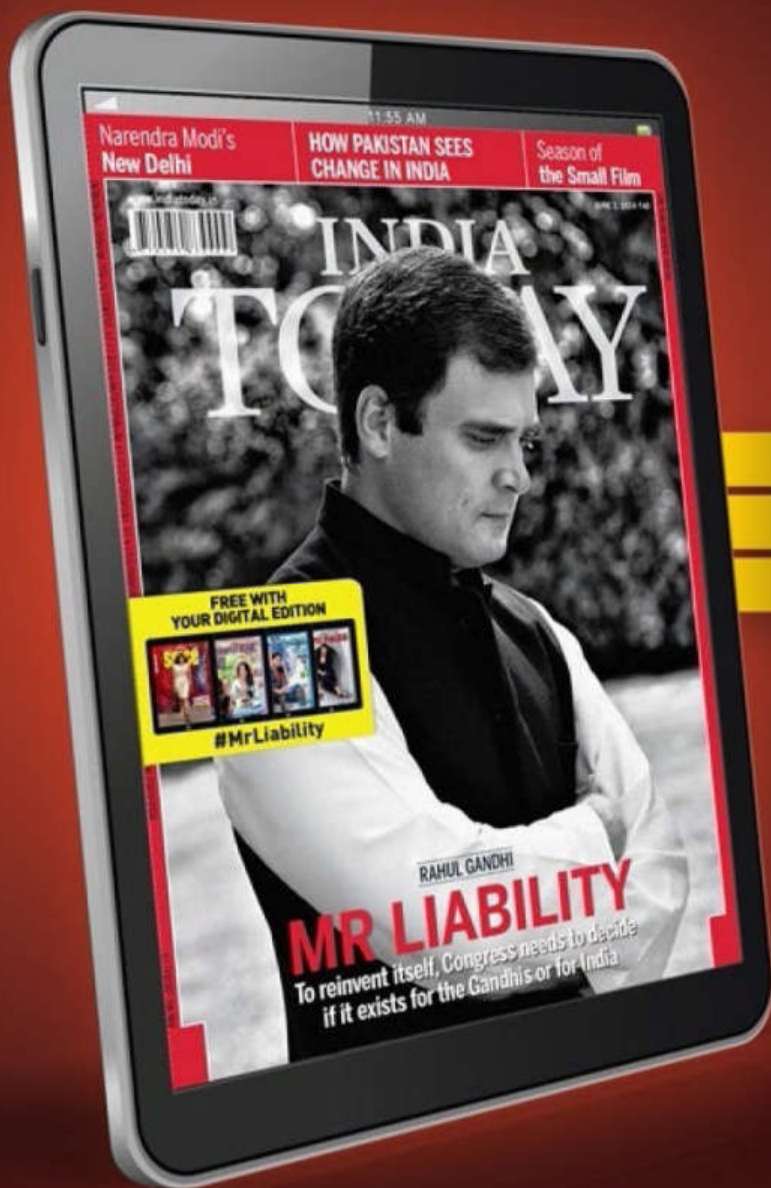
AKHILESH YADAV
WANTS TO EXPAND HIS
PARTY'S FOOTPRINT
IN A STATE WHOSE
CURRENT SOCIAL
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ARE THE AGEING LALU,
67, AND NITISH, 64.

powerful leadership visible in the RJD second rung—notwithstanding Lalu's attempts to pass on his legacy to his sons and Pappu Yadav's attempts at usurping it—Akhilesh, at 42, has age on his side.

Through the summer of Janata camaraderie, Lalu would harken to his family ties with Mulayam—the SP chief is the grand-uncle-in-law of Lalu's youngest daughter Raj Lakshmi—to emphasise that the head of the fledgling Parivar will let its principal combatants run the show in Bihar. In one fell swoop, Netaji has reminded his *samdhi* (relative) of the age-old adage: kinship knows no kinship.

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NATION **MEAT BAN**

MORE THAN MEATS THE EYE

Outrage over meat proscription continues as more BJP-ruled states join the 'ban' wagon

By Jyoti Malhotra

In this age of competitive zeal, to eat or not to eat meat has become the touchstone of loyalty to the RSS, India's most exclusive club of strategists, planners and self-avowed patriots. Without saying a word, the wise men of Nagpur seem to have got BJP-ruled states to implement a ban on the sale of meat for at least a couple of days, in courteous deference to the Jain community which is celebrating the festival of Paryushana which ends on September 17.

Now, some would argue that there's nothing wrong with vegetarianism, except of course when the government gets involved in planning your menu for the week. All the states that have banned meat are also ruled by the BJP, giving rise to the niggling

feeling that a heavy dose of politics has been added to the menu.

None other than the Supreme Court, in fact, remarked in March 2008 that there was nothing wrong in observing a few meatless days in a year, especially if this made the Jains happy. Vindicating the ban on slaughterhouses in Ahmedabad, the highest court of the land noted: "In a multi-cultural country like ours with such diversity, one should not be over sensitive and over touchy about a short restriction when it is being done out of respect for the sentiments of a particular section of society."

The question is why the tiny but influential Jain community, comprising 0.4 per cent of India's population and given minority status by the UPA government in January

2014, has become the focus of a national debate which has quickly gone beyond food to now encompass the rights and responsibilities of citizens versus the state.

It is important, at the very beginning, to get the Jain point of view out of the way. The annual festival of Paryushana lasts from 8 to 10 days, depending upon the Shwetambara or Digambara sect that one belongs to, during which the laity undertake periods of study as well as fasting, even foregoing the eating of vegetables as they are believed to cause them harm and subsisting on boiled water once a day. At the conclusion of the festival, on Paryushana day, lay-people or "sravakas" ask each other for forgiveness for offences during the previous year.

States such as Maharashtra,



DANESH JASSAWALA

MEAT SHOPS AT MIRA ROAD NEAR MUMBAI

Rajasthan, in 2008 the BJP government had implemented a nine-day ban, which Ashok Gehlot's Congress government later reduced to three days. This year as well, Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has ordered that the ban be limited to only three days, including September 17—when Ganesh Chaturthi also falls, and when the sale of meat has also been banned in Bengaluru.

Meanwhile in Haryana, no one is really sure whether there is a ban for two days, nine days or none at all. The office of the Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, refused to confirm or deny the banned dates, even as officials said that Haryana's Urban Local Bodies Minister Kavita Jain had instigated the ban so as to look good in front of her community. It seems that the municipal council in Jat-majority Fatehabad had on September 10 directed that slaughterhouses be closed. Except Jain denies that such an order was issued.

Chhattisgarh is also believed to have developed cold feet and rapidly reduced the number of banned days from four to two. As for Jammu & Kashmir, none other than its Deputy Advocate General Parimoksh Seth filed a PIL, seeking the enforcement of the 1930s-era Ranbir Penal Code, when the erstwhile Maharaja of Kashmir had ordered the ban in question.

BJP Vice President Vinay Sahasrabudhe believes that the media reporting of the ban has been unfairly blown out of proportion. Pointing out that the Maharashtra ban was at least a couple of decades old, he said that the media was "attributing intentions when none exist. These things have happened for some time, they may not be a BJP invention".

Pointing out the fact that the practice of banning sale of meat during a Jain festival was decades old in Maharashtra, the BJP has accused the media of attributing intentions when none exist.

Asked whether the Bombay High Court's overturning of the Maharashtra government's ban in Mumbai was a criticism of the Devendra Fadnavis government, Sahasrabudhe pointed out that the courts, at different times, had given "different and perhaps arbitrary" rulings on the subject.

Perhaps it was time, he said, to start a real conversation between all communities on the "politics of hurt emotions". It was common for religious processions, for example, during Ganesh Chaturthi, not to pass by in front of a mosque. Other times, as in the case of the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper in France, the demand for banning cartoons had resulted in such grave tragedy, Sahasrabudhe added. Clearly, the BJP and RSS are hoping that a conversation along these lines will absolve them of the charge of being anti-Muslim but also reaffirm to their constituency that they will continue their attempt to put Muslims "in their place".

But meat defiance is beginning to surface, including within the BJP. Recently, BJP leader Khursheed Ahmad Malik from southern Kashmir hosted a "beef party", which included pure vegetarian items for his Hindu guests, signaling that all wasn't well with the partnership between the BJP and the PDP in the state.

Coming in the wake of the beef ban in Maharashtra and Haryana, the ban on meat, even for a few days, has compounded the prevailing sense that if you are not with the BJP, you are against it. The BJP-led governments appear to be falling over each other to please the RSS, indicating that similar moves to "cleanse" Indian society could gather steam in the coming days.

For a party that won such an overwhelming mandate just over a year ago, to fritter it away slowly on marginal issues such as food is to not only negate the nature of the vote but also feed into a rising sense of intolerance. The BJP and the Prime Minister must be especially careful to see that their agenda for development doesn't get swallowed up by the irrelevance of our times.

Follow the writer on Twitter @jomalhotra

Gujarat and Rajasthan with large populations of Jains have even in recent years shut down their slaughterhouses for several days during Paryushana, but it certainly seems that the ban on the sale of meat is a recent enthusiasm.

As the Bombay High Court, which upturned the ban in Mumbai, noted, "There is a progressive look to Mumbai. These are regressive steps. We understand the sentiment part. But purchase is an independent choice," the court said.

It also asked the Maharashtra government why, in the name of Ahimsa, it did not also resort to banning the sale of seafood and eggs, and decided to only ban meat. "We have to change our attitude in view of globalisation," said the judges.

It seems that Mumbai can now buy or sell meat even on September 17, but the rest of Maharashtra can't. In

FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

From Maharashtra to Telangana, farmers bear the brunt as drought looms large

By Amarnath K. Menon

Vast swathes of land across Telangana are dry and cracked, the crops withered, if not already destroyed. As desolate farmers stare at the mounting debts, death seems an easier option. Although exact numbers are hard to determine—government sources claim not all farmer suicides can be directly linked to financial distress—Telangana has reported 409 farmer suicides since the state came into being on June 2, 2014. Telangana Agriculture Minister Pocharam Srinivas Reddy too has recently admitted that at least one farmer committed suicide every day. NGOs and farmers' organisations, however, put the figure at almost thrice as much.

This is not the first time when severe drought conditions have led to crop failure, mounting debts and farmer suicides across the Deccan Plateau from Marathwada in Maharashtra to Telangana and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. While the Marathwada region is facing drought for the fourth consecutive year—with Beed district alone recording more than 105 suicides in August—Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have been severely affected for the second year in a row. Incidents of farmers killing themselves due to financial distress have been reported from Medak, Ranga Reddy, Adilabad, Khammam, Warangal and Mahabubnagar districts of Telangana.

With the south-west monsoon playing truant and starting to withdraw,

tell-tale signs of a looming drought are building up.

While inadequate rainfall—22 per cent in the southern peninsula—in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh has severely affected the livelihood of farmers, lack of water for irrigation projects from the Krishna and Godavari rivers has further hit the sowing operations. Following the inconsistent inflow of water, the Krishna River Management Board has decided to limit the entire available Krishna waters stored in the Nagarjunasagar and Srisailem reservoirs for drinking water purposes, without apportioning anything for irrigation to the two states.

In addition to that, poor pace of loan disbursement has also compounded the distress in Telangana. Banks have disbursed only Rs 6,631

VILLAGERS AT A COMMON WELL IN DROUGHT-HIT AURANGABAD DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA



SHAIKH AZIZ

crore to 1.5 million farmers till September 1 as against a target of Rs 18,000 crore to 3.5 million farmers by September-end. On September 4, an angry state agriculture minister took the bankers to task at the quarterly meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee for Telangana. "How will you meet the target? I'm answerable to the people. What should I tell them?" Reddy pleaded helplessness.

He claimed that besides failing to meet their lending target, the banks have been collecting four per cent interest on farm loans, although the state government has been paying the interest. If all that was not enough, farmers are also being harassed to repay crop loan dues despite an undertaking given by the state that it would repay the crop loan in four instalments.

With no help in sight, the farmers are forced to sell their cattle to slaughterhouses due to a massive shortage of fodder for the 11.8 million cattle across the state.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, however, passes the buck to

Maharashtra and Karnataka for his state's worsening situation. "Construction of 218 barrages across the Godavari by Maharashtra and 78 others on the Krishna and the Bheema by Karnataka has cut off water flow to the reservoirs in Telangana," KCR said recently after coming to know that only 34.08 lakh hectares out of the 41.43 lakh hectares of cultivable area was sown.

The crisis has been compounded for the fourth year in a row, in what is perhaps the worst-hit area—Beed in Marathwada region—of Maharashtra with many of the 2.5 million people migrating to Mumbai and other cities in western Maharashtra. Marathwada, which comprises Aurangabad, Nanded, Latur, Parbhani, Jalna, Beed, Hingoli and Osmanabad, received just 240 mm of rain as against 719 mm that it usually gets until the first week of September. The crisis has been worsened by the presence of as many as 70 sugar factories in the region which end up

using huge amounts of water.

In February this year, the Maharashtra government said that nearly 9 million farmers have been hit by the drought. The state is planning to provide a slew of benefits and concessions, including a fee waiver for students up to Class XII. It is also likely to bear half of the fees for children of farmers (who earn up to Rs 2.5 lakh a year) pursuing higher education in medicine, engineering and other professional courses.

Moreover, panchayat samitis have been instructed to grant work under the various employment guarantee schemes of the Centre and state to whoever approaches them. "The central and state governments come up with knee-jerk responses such as the palliative of writing off loans, a temporary control of prices of inputs or assuring some help with the product-pricing mechanism. But what farmers really need are sustainable measures for growth, not sops that make it a perennial struggle for existence with agriculture," says P. Chengal Reddy, adviser, Consortium of Indian Farmers' Associations.

Meanwhile, updated analysis of the monsoon data suggests that when it will finally taper off in September-end, the total fall will be at least 10 per cent below normal, enough to hit the production of both kharif and rabi crops as water levels in the 91 major reservoirs have dipped and some are likely to go dry soon.

Ironically, despite deficient rainfall, by early September the total area sown has increased to 96.78 million hectares across the country compared to 96.59 million hectares last year. Clearly, the absence of agriculture advisories to farmers is responsible for this paradoxical situation. Acreage under all summer crops, except cotton and jute, was higher but the yield is expected to be lower on weak germination and plant development.

A back-to-back drought is uncommon having occurred only four times in a hundred years with the last being in 1986-87. But nearly three decades later, the country is still haunted by a spate of farmer suicides.

Follow the writer on Twitter @AmarnathKMenon

DROUGHT DEMON

Deficit rainfall has hit farmers hard

- Monsoon deficit has been at 12 per cent in this season (June 1 to September 2).
- But the rain deficit in the southern peninsula and central India was 22 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, according to the IMD.
- Maharashtra and Karnataka are the worst affected. While Karnataka has declared drought in 27 out of 30 districts, states such as Maharashtra and Telangana are yet to declare a drought.
- In the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, the monsoon rainfall deficit is as high as 51 per cent, Karnataka 43 per cent, Telangana 25 per cent and Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh 21 per cent.
- While Telangana has reported almost one death every day, Beed district in Maharashtra has recorded more than 105 suicides in August alone.



OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS THE MINDSET OF CONTROLLING

GUEST COLUMN



BIBEK DEBROY

As a society delivering a structure of governance, we need to be much more eccentric. I am not using the word “eccentric” in the sense of weird, but in the sense of off-centre. How many times have you heard the expression “Centre-state”? That’s wrong and misleading. It’s wrong because the word “Centre” doesn’t figure in the Constitution. The right expression is “Union of states”. The expression “Centre-state” is misleading because it suggests there is a govern-

ment in Delhi (the Centre) as the hub, with spokes radiating out to the periphery. The spokes actually radiate inwards. Around 95 per cent of India’s national income is generated in the states. However, the Centre-state expression has got so deeply ingrained in our psyche that a commission set up on Union-state relations called itself the Commission on Centre-State Relations. In 2010, this commission submitted a seven-volume report (12 volumes with appendices). Read the first volume to understand how colonial policy excessively centralised governance and how economic and non-economic policies in post-Independent India built an edifice on that colonial foundation. Post-Independence, there were several cusps in that regress towards centralisation. One of these started in the mid-1960s, proliferation of centrally sponsored schemes (CSSs) being an example.

There is a decision-making aspect to governance. Other than that, both government and governance are about providing public goods and services. (This expression is not being used in the strict economists’ sense.) There is an optimal level at which these can be provided. There are diseconomies of scale and scope, both above that level and below. Sure, optimal levels differ from item to item. Most public goods and services, where governmental legislation, regulation or expenditure is required, should actually be local body subjects. Citizens increasingly exert countervailing pressure for better delivery. But because there hasn’t been decentralisation and rejigging of priorities, the supply side is unable to respond to altered demand conditions. Consider public expenditure. Its content should not only vary from state to state, but from district to district, from block to block and perhaps even from village to village. This is the true spirit

of decentralised planning, now a constitutional mandate, observed more in the breach. In a strict legal sense, India isn’t a federation. However, loosely, we do use the expression federalism, usually interpreted as Union-state. But decentralisation is more than this narrow interpretation of federalism.

On Union-state, the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution has almost 100 items in the Union List, around 60 in the State List and 50 in the Concurrent List. The Seventh Schedule itself reflects unwarranted centralisation. There should be a pruned Union List, an expanded State List, a repealed Concurrent List and an added Local Body List. Decentralisation and devolution aren’t only about Union-state relations. Intra-state decentralisation is even more important, but a few states have devolved the entire range of funds, functions and functionaries. Note that the Seventh Schedule isn’t cast in stone. It has been amended in the past, always in the direction of greater centralisation. It should be amended in the future, in the direction of greater decentralisation. Indeed, why does the Union government exhibit a proclivity towards legislating in areas that are in the Concurrent List? That should be done only after consulting the states, better still, when the states ask for it.

The states differ in natural resource and other endowments and priorities. If we accept this principle, Parliament won’t legislate or spend on health, agriculture and land (State List) and won’t legislate, unless asked, on transfer of property, forests and labour (Concurrent List). All governments have limited administrative and fiscal capacity. The Union government is no different. If it is distracted by what is not in the Union List, it won’t be able to satisfactorily deliver on what is in it—defence, foreign affairs, railways, highways, banking and the like. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for Parliament to over-legislate. My understanding of constitutional principles (not constitutional law) is

Government becomes governance by bringing in citizen participation. Why should Delhi decide what a ‘Smart City’ should look like?

that the Rajya Sabha is primarily about state matters. However, the difference between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha has blurred, even more so after domicile requirement for the Rajya Sabha was removed in 2003. How many times does the Rajya Sabha debate matters related to states? Why does the Lok Sabha always debate matters concerning states? Shouldn’t bills on state subjects (concurrent and state lists) only be first introduced in the Rajya Sabha? The intention isn’t to suggest simplistic



Illustration by SAURABH SINGH

answers. Hence, these questions are no more than rhetorical. The bottom line is that, somewhere down the line, the Seventh Schedule needs amendments.

What's the difference between Indian and western/European classical music? In the western format, thanks to scores and notations, a piece of music is predictable. During a concert, there is a conductor to ensure that everything follows a fixed format. An Indian musical performance, of whatever variety, is quite different. If there is more than one artiste, at best they will agree on raga/tala and everything else will be left to improvisation. Since this government was voted in, we have witnessed the beginnings of a journey towards decentralisation, but not reached the terminal destination. This has been partly facilitated by the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, which has recommended untied transfers to states and also to local bodies. (Within states, state-level finance commissions now need to mirror this and their recommendations should be accepted.) Avoiding the nitty-gritty, this entails a change in institutional underpinnings of fiscal federalism, as we have historically understood it for six decades and more. Abolition of the plan versus non-plan distinction is only one fallout. Historically, states have often legitimately complained about rigidity of public expenditure schemes devised in the now-defunct Planning Commission, futilely attempting to function like a mainframe. Contours of public expenditure schemes are now being fashioned by chief ministers (there are sub-groups, and recommendations will eventually be accepted by the collective body of chief ministers).

The collective body of chief ministers is also Niti Aayog's Governing Council. Replacing the Planning Commission with Niti Aayog was easy. Altering the Planning Commission

mindset, deeply ingrained into our conscious and sub-conscious, is much more difficult. Capacity, whether at state or local body level, never develops unless one lets go. These are precisely the arguments that led to excessive centralisation. Government becomes governance by bringing in citizen participation. Why should Delhi decide what a 'Smart City' should look like? Let the citizens decide. On public expenditure, for instance, it is desirable to reduce infant and/or maternal mortality. A state may devise a public expenditure intervention to reduce either (health is included in the State List.) That's the raga/tala and resources can only be used for this objective. But within that template, surely what should be done varies from one village to another. One reason why public expenditure schemes haven't led to tangible improvements in outcomes is because they didn't encourage improvisation through decentralisation. Benchmarking performance was equated with mechanical test of expenditure through utilisation certificates.

The challenge is the one I mentioned, the mindset of controlling. It is almost as if democracy is antithetical to our existence. As long as one is not in a position of controlling, one argues against controls. The moment one is in a position to exercise controls, one is patronising and wants to control. 'People are foolish, they don't necessarily know what is good for them.' This attitude characterises not only decentralisation, but many aspects of reform. That's the reason the journey has just started, without yet reaching the destination. But perhaps this challenge is a transient one. If one has appreciated western classical for decades, the switch to Indian classical can't be instantaneous.

Bibek Debroy is an economist and member of the Niti Aayog

HOMES YOU CAN ACTUALLY DREAM OF

As an ever-ever expanding middle class drives the demand for affordable housing across cities, private developers, on cue, offer more bang for the buck

By M.G. Arun

Ram Naresh Verma, 60, a food inspector from Gonda district in Uttar Pradesh, decided to live in Lucknow after retirement primarily since the security of his family, comprising his wife and daughter, was of paramount importance to him. He sold his paternal home in Gonda and, after putting in some extra money from provident fund savings, purchased a flat worth Rs 35 lakh in a housing society on Sitapur Road near the Mohibullapur railway station in Lucknow. A safe environment and uninterrupted supply of power and water are attractions that have lured not just Verma but many others to Lucknow from the surrounding districts, driving the demand for affordable housing specially on the capital's outskirts.

At a time when the central government is placing strong emphasis on the "Housing for All by 2022" mission, realty consultants expect the strong demand pipeline in cities such as Lucknow to drive the private sector's participation in creating affordable housing. Realty consultant Cushman & Wakefield, for instance, has estimated that the urban affordable housing segment currently presents a Rs 75,800-crore opportunity for the private sector.

The demand for affordable housing is seen at 535,400 units across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Pune. This is based on the demand for units in the price range of Rs 20-50 lakh in these cities, except for Mumbai where the range is between Rs 50-70 lakh.

A rule of thumb for de-

fining affordable housing is that the equated monthly instalment (EMI) on the home should not exceed 30 per cent of a household's gross income. Parameters underlying the concept of affordable housing include income levels, size of dwelling units and housing costs. While the first two parameters are independent of each other, the third is dependent on real estate policies and therefore varies in different parts of the country. "Houses which cost below Rs 65 lakh and those below Rs 50 lakh are considered in the bracket of affordable housing in metros and non-metros respectively," says Brotin Banerjee, managing director of Tata Housing, which is in the process of building 20,000 affordable homes in Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad and Mumbai of which over 6,000 have already been

handed over.

Many large developers in this space say they do not compromise on comforts when they deliver such houses. Godrej Properties, for instance, says it aims to "provide a holistic living experience" to its customers and have amenities such as dedicated kids play area, clubhouse, gymnasiums and green open spaces. In addition to this, they also have some sustainable features such as rainwater harvesting at some of these projects, says its Chief Marketing Officer Girish Shah.

With a shortage of 24.7 million homes across the country and 70 per cent of it in the affordable housing space, the industry sees this segment growing at healthy rates in the next three to five years. There is a huge demand for quality residential development across the country.

A CONSTRUCTION
SITE NEAR GACHIBOWLI
IT HUB IN HYDERABAD



A PRABHAKAR RAO



About 80 million households in India are estimated to be living in slums for want of affordable housing, says Vivekanand Babu, president, sales & marketing, VBHC Value Homes. As the Indian middle class expands, the demand for affordable housing is likely to increase further.

“Consequently, the potential market size for affordable housing in urban India is forecast to grow about 1.5 times—the figure will be around 38 million households in 2030. The maximum potential is believed to be in rich Tier-I cities that have a considerable mass of urban poor, and in lower-income Tier-IV cities,” adds Babu.

However, construction of affordable houses in the country has been challenging for developers due to a number of reasons. The rapid pace of urbanisation

has led to a crunch in the availability of land, making it extremely expensive. Then there’s also the issue of prime land parcels being in the control of various government agencies such as the Indian Railways, Port Trust of India, etc. To be fair though, there are certain policy decisions being made, such as the new regulatory Development Control Regulations (DCR), recent increase in the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in Delhi state and plans to increase it in Maharashtra, which are moves in the right direction. The central government should also synchronise these new rules with infrastructure development along the new locations and ensure timely completion of these projects.

Apart from these, India remains one of the most regulated real estate mar-

kets in the world requiring approximately 57 clearances from various government agencies, taking up considerable amount of time to get all the permissions in place. Amalgamation of all these factors increases the cost of the project for the developers, which then constrains them from being able to provide homes at affordable rates to buyers.

MUMBAI

The price challenge

Affordable housing is the most complex and challenging problem in Mumbai, where 42 per cent of housing comprises slums in which 5.2 million people live. According to a study done by the Praja Foundation, an NGO, the average price of a 269-sq-foot dwelling in Mumbai is Rs 28 lakh. At this high price, a vast majority of Mumbaiers whose me-



HYDERABAD

Who

Accurate Builders, Prestige, NCC, Rajapushpa, SMR Holdings, Prajay Engineers Syndicate

Where

Manikonda, Hitec City, Madhapur, Gachibowli

Price range

Rs 20 lakh-Rs 40 lakh

Drivers

Rise in number of low income buyers willing to upgrade to better housing options; rise in commercial projects offering new employment opportunities.



Delhi

DELHI

Who

Delhi Development Authority, Emaar MGF, Parsvnath Developers, Revanta and Antriksh

Where

Dwarka, Rohini, Uttam Nagar, L-Zone, Sarita Vihar, Hauz Khas, Narela

Price range

Rs 30-50 lakh

Drivers

Delhi offers world-class infrastructure and excellent connectivity through road, metro, rail and air. After land-pooling policy, developers are planning to launch affordable projects.



Maharashtra

MUMBAI

Who

Tata Housing, Godrej Properties, S Raheja, Haware Builders, Poddar Developers

Where

Kalyan, Boisar, Vasind, Palghar

Price range

Rs 10 lakh-Rs 30 lakh in Asangaon and Boisar, Rs 50 lakh-Rs 60 lakh closer to Mumbai city

Drivers

Homes in city getting expensive; far-flung areas better linked by road and rail.

dian annual income is Rs 2.4 lakh cannot afford a home. Various schemes such as the special township, cluster redevelopment and slum rehabilitation have been put forward by successive governments but challenges remain. Praja estimates that since 1995, about 200,000 public housing units have been added to the stock, whereas Mumbai needs at least 1.13 million homes.

Nevertheless, there have been several projects from private developers such as Tata Housing, Godrej Properties, S Raheja, Haware Builders and Poddar Developers in the affordable housing space. Such projects are seen in high numbers in suburbs such as Boisar, Asangaon and the Thane-Kalyan and Vasai-Virar belts, ranging from as low as Rs 10-30 lakh in Asangaon and Boisar to Rs 50-60 lakh closer to the city.

Godrej Properties has a project, Godrej Hill, in Kalyan, while Tata Housing has one in Boisar.

VBHC Value Homes has projects in Vasind and Palghar near Mumbai. The Maharashtra government is giving shape to a project to provide 500,000 affordable homes in the states over the next five years in tandem with large developers.

Developers are leaving no stone unturned to woo customers with amenities such as parks and open spaces, sewage treatment plants, club houses and even swimming pools.

DELHI

Why look at NCR?

Even though Delhi saw completion of large-scale infrastructure projects in the last couple of years, there has not been much construction of flats in the city, making buyers purchase property in nearby locations such as Noida, Faridabad and Gurgaon. However, property prices in several areas of the capital are lower than in the NCR locations.

Affordable property is available across locations such as Dwarka, Uttam Nagar, Rohini, Green

Park, Mehrauli, Narela, Paschim Vihar and Sheikh Sarai. The prices of flats range between Rs 30 lakh and Rs 50 lakh across these locations.

According to Abhishek Goyat, managing director of Delhi-based realtor Antriksh Group, the land pooling policy of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), once implemented, will be a key driver of the capital's realty market. "The government, for the first time after Independence, has come out with an ambitious plan to offer the best possible living space in Delhi," he says. Around 50,000 acres of land would be available for new projects following the urban development ministry's nod to land pooling, say experts, which means more than 220,000 new flats are going to be constructed in the coming years.

Delhi's realty market is driven by end-users with 65 per cent of them having monthly incomes of around Rs 25,000-Rs 40,000. While the prices of DDA flats in Delhi are

A TATA HOUSING PROJECT IN BOISAR, MUMBAI



DANESH JASSAWALA

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FOR MANAGING TOMORROW

A VBHC VAIBHAVA GROUP PROJECT IN BENGALURU



Karnataka

BENGALURU

Who

Provident Housing, Cummins Estate, Sowparnika, Tata Value Homes, Godrej Properties, VBHC

Where

Magadi Road, Horamavu, Whitefield, Nelamangala, Electronic City

Price range

Rs 2,800-Rs 3,700 per sq ft

Drivers

Huge demand recorded from the low-mid level income groups; growth in manufacturing, BPO and hospitality sectors.

anyway competitive vis-a-vis flats in Noida and Gurgaon, real estate consultant Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) India estimates that property prices are down by as much as 20 per cent across most locations in Delhi. This, then, is a good time for end-users to buy an affordable home.

Many developers are also rolling out projects in the L and J zones near the Dwarka-Gurgaon expressway and south Delhi respectively which have seen a lot of speculative buying. Experts, however, advise home buyers to invest only after the developer secures DDA approval.

Bengaluru

Flourishing on the fringe

Top real estate players have lined up affordable housing projects in Bengaluru, one of the country's most stable real estate markets.

According to JLL India, some of the major projects

in affordable housing here are: The Tree by Provident Housing located off Magadi Road, Cummins Genesis by Cummins Estate at Horamavu, Purple Rose by Sowparnika and Vaibhava Serene Town by VBHC in Whitefield, New Haven by Tata Value Homes at Nelamangala, and Godrej E-City by Godrej Properties in Electronic City.

At present, affordable homes are available in the price range of Rs 2,800 and Rs 3,700 per sq ft depending on the location and project specifications. Mysuru Road, areas in and around Electronic City, Varthur Road, Yelahanka, and Doddaballapur Road have emerged as the favourite destinations for affordable housing projects in Bengaluru. At present, there are around 30 such projects offering 16,296 housing units.

Developers say the city has great potential for affordable housing projects

owing to the demand from low-mid level income groups. "The growth in manufacturing, BPO and hospitality sectors and the use of European technology that has helped lower cost of construction without compromising on quality have provided a fillip to the affordable housing segment," says Vivekanand Babu, president, sales and marketing, VBHC Value Homes Pvt Ltd.

Infrastructure hurdles, however, remain an issue. "Basic infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals and good connectivity, are not available in certain locations where these projects are coming up," points out Trivita Roy, associate director, JLL.

HYDERABAD

Leaving uncertainty behind

Affordable housing in Hyderabad is in the Rs 20-40 lakh range as prices are more competitive than in other metros. Accurate

Developers, Prestige, NCC, Rajapushpa, SMR Holdings, Prajay Engineers, Janapriya, Modi Builders, Pride India, Apurupa Infra are among those with ongoing projects in different parts of the city.

The Hyderabad realty market has picked up in recent years with improved buyer sentiment. There is a spurt in demand, ranging between one and five per cent, over that prior to June 2014 when the market was plagued by uncertainty about the future of Hyderabad after the division of Andhra Pradesh.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has logged a substantial increase in the number of building permissions and approvals for residential projects this year. The demand is greater in west Hyderabad, particularly in Manikonda,HITEC City, Madhapur and Gachibowli.

West Bengal

KOLKATA

Who

Shapoorji Pallonji, Siddha, Hiland and Eden

Where

Barasat Madhyamgram and areas in Joka

Price range

Rs 2,500 per sq ft

Drivers

Young, upwardly mobile couples preferring to move out of joint families; developers wooing buyers with a host of amenities such as open spaces, community halls, clubs and pools.

Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI

Who

Akshaya, VGN, Tata Housing, Mahindra, Amarprakash Builders, Inno Geocity

Where

Pallavaram, the Old Mahabalipuram Road belt, Velachery, Perambur, Perungudi

Price range

Rs 2,500-Rs 7,500 per sq ft

Drivers

Increasing demand from the low-income group; Tamil Nadu's rising profile as an investment destination for businesses.



AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT IN SECTOR 12, DWARKA

RAJWANT RAWAT

"If the state offers some concessions by way of development fees, tax exemptions, waiver of VAT, concession in registration charges and similar incentives, developers may be attracted to avail of it and pass on the benefit to buyers," says Sumit Sen, director, sales, Prajaya Engineers. But with the Jawaharlal Nehru Outer Ring Road to be open fully along all stretches by March next, and proposed investments by Google, Amazon and the Brookfield Property Group having been announced, the demand for affordable housing is poised to go up.

CHENNAI

Small is beautiful

Most major developers, including Akshaya, VGN, Tata Housing, Mahindra, Amarprakash Builders, Inno GeoCity and Arun Excello have announced affordable housing projects in the city. According to the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, options for investment are high in neighbourhoods that have promising infra projects lined up, such as Pallavaram, the Old Mahabalipuram Road belt

and Velachery, and this has resulted in realtors such as Jain Housing and Ceebros pushing affordable housing in these areas.

In the west, large residences by Tata Housing and Mahindra are priced at about Rs 3,500 per square feet, located off Poonamallee about 25 km from Broadway, but within the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority limits. This belt is also shared by other affordable properties by Shantha Promoters, VGN and Romaa Housing. The lowest price starts with Oragadam—about 50 km from Broadway, at Rs 2,500 per square. It goes up to properties priced at Rs 7,500 per square feet around Perungudi.

"In affordable housing, it is important that buyers have low maintenance costs as they are already committed to EMIs. As a result, the amenities have to be basic, self-sustaining and less burdensome on them. Therefore, smaller projects with little or no amenities are definitely selling better," says Amit Damodar Chugh of the Chennai Real Estate Agents Association.

KOLKATA

The suburban surge

Demand for affordable housing seems to outweigh supply in Kolkata specially when it comes to living more centrally, says Sudarshana Gangulee, senior GM (marketing) of the Mani Group which is planning a few such homes in Phase-II of its 100-acre IQ City project in Durgapur. "Any activity involving affordable housing is usually seen around the city's outskirts," she says.

Groups such as Shapoorji Pallonji, Siddha, Hiland and Eden have achieved considerable success on projects aimed at the affordable segment. Groups with a presence in the suburbs such as Barasat Madhyamgram or Joka are happy with the rising demand. One of them claims to have sold 30 flats at an average rate of Rs 2,500 per sq ft. Depending on the area and its proximity to the central business district, the amenities provided and prices vary between Rs 2,250 and Rs 4,000 per sq ft.

with Amarnath K. Menon, Ashish Misra, Alok Singh,

Aravind Gowda, Malini Banerjee and Saranya Chakrapani

Follow the writer on Twitter @MGArun1

Sania's Win Is Not Good for Indian Tennis

How doubles titles at Grand Slams are hiding our lack of drive and ambition

On Sunday night, when Novak Djokovic expertly fended off a resurgent Roger Federer, the ripple effect of a spellbinding US Open was felt half a world away in India. Our own Sania Mirza, the one who had faded away before scripting what is being considered a personal renaissance, was on the roll of honour, lifting the women's doubles title with yesteryear superstar Martina Hingis, who also won the mixed doubles title with Leander Paes.

Over the last six seasons, Indians have won 11 Grand Slam titles. Seven of these have come in mixed doubles, and two each in men's and women's doubles. These are impressive numbers that would suggest Indian tennis is in a wonderful place—there is consistency, drive, ambition, and triumph.

But the reality, sometimes stranger than fiction and often conveniently overlooked, could not be more different. The last six seasons mark what is perhaps the worst period for the sport in our country in over half a century. Indian tennis is backed into a dangerous corner—there is no ambition, no drive, and our consistent triumphs in doubles mask an all-pervading sense of hopelessness as we scan the horizon for our next genuine stalwart.

India's best singles player, Yuki Bhambri, is ranked 125th on the ATP tour. He is followed by Somdev Devvarman, now 30 years old, at 164th, and Saketh Myneni at 195th. Remember any of them staring at you from TV screens or newspaper pages recently? Our top women's player, Ankita Raina, is ranked 238th. None of them have won a World Tour title.

Contrast this to a time when an Indian tennis player was always capable of springing a surprise on the grandest of stages. Ramanathan Krishnan was among the world's finest in the '50s and '60s. He was ranked

sixth, and made two Wimbledon semi-finals. The baton was passed to Vijay Amritraj, who lit up the '70s and '80s, reaching 16th on the rankings chart, winning 16 titles, and defeating John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors in their prime. The '80s also brought Ramesh Krishnan to the fore, his touch tennis a throwback to his father Ramanathan. Ramesh won eight titles, was ranked 23rd, and played then world No. 1 Mats Wilander at the 1989 Australian Open.

This tradition of fighters continued with Paes in the '90s. Armed with 'one volley and one heart', he climbed to No. 73 on the ATP ladder, won a tour title, picked up a singles bronze at the

were on the wane. Their chest-bumping chemistry lit up the circuit, giving them six titles in 1997, and taking them to all four Grand Slam finals in 1999. That was a time when doubles, although in decline, had not been sidelined completely. The McEnroe-Fleming era was over, but pairs such as the Woodies were still around.

However, as doubles deteriorated into a pleasant pastime, Indian players who followed Paes and Bhupathi picked up all the wrong pointers from their success. They saw the format as a meal-ticket, something for which they didn't have to work as hard, and which would give them enough money to stop bothering with their singles

careers altogether. Once their newfound success was toasted by the Indian media, with no riders attached to add perspective, there was no turning back. In 2013, McEnroe, who usually hits the nail on the head, asked in an interview with *The Times*, London: "Doubles—Why are we even playing it?" He went on to say: "I look at it now and say, what is this? Doubles are the slow guys who aren't quick enough to play singles. Would it be better off, no disrespect, if there was no doubles at all...?"

The level of competition is apparent when you look at the list of doubles champions over the last decade. If Martina Navratilova could win a US Open mixed doubles title in 2006 at 49 years of age, and if Martina Hingis can lift back-to-back Grand Slam women's doubles titles in 2015, seven years after her second retirement, how high can the standard be?

So, congratulations to Sania. But forgive us for appreciating the heights she scaled a decade ago more than her Grand Slam titles. And let's take a moment to lament the decline of Indian tennis, which is stuck in a glory-hunting rut with no one to rescue it.

Follow the writer on Twitter @ [kunal_pradhan](#)



SANIA MIRZA (RIGHT) WITH MARTINA HINGIS

1996 Atlanta Olympics, and continued our magnificent Davis Cup tradition by consistently defeating higher-ranked players. The next great hopes were Sania, a trailblazing women's player who broke countless barriers by reaching No. 27 in the world in 2007, and Devvarman, who climbed to 62nd in 2011 and looked like he might even break into the top 50.

But over the last decade, and particularly since 2010, Indian players got into the habit of chasing minor glories rather than striving for the ultimate prize. The blame for this, for no fault of their own, must fall on Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi. The two had come together as a doubles team at a time when their own singles careers



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By Amarnath K. Menon

The road leading to Yadagirigutta, about 50 km northeast of Hyderabad, already bears signs of the good days to come. With a dream of giving his state its own 'Tirumala' to rival Andhra Pradesh's famous temple, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is all set to give the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Yadagirigutta, now renamed Yadadri, a mega-makeover.

Following bifurcation, Andhra Pradesh retained the richest, and perhaps the most-visited place of worship in the world, the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirumala. Telangana, meanwhile, was left with little to match that grandeur. Its best bet, the temple in Yadagirigutta situated on a hillock with an estate of 190 acres in Nalgonda district, earned a mere Rs 73.31 crore in 2014-15 against Tirumala's Rs 2,262.52 crore. Ergo the rush to scale it up.

In February, the KCR government created the Yadagirigutta Temple Development Authority (YDA) to oversee the proposed makeover of the Vaishnavite temple. Accordingly, the YDA has identified eight more hillocks near the temple to be developed into one temple town spread over 2,015 acres to compete with the Seshachalam hills—a group of seven hills—of Tirupati.

But KCR is well aware of the fact that the number of pilgrims visiting Yadadri—about 5,000 on weekdays and 20,000 on holidays before announcing his plans—is way behind Tirumala's up to 60,000 visitors on weekdays and at least 85,000 on weekends. Yadagirigutta remained a neglected shrine in undivided Andhra Pradesh, with at least two in every five visitors to Tirumala going from Telangana. Rao hopes to divert this footfall, ensuring more for Yadagirigutta. He is therefore striving hard to literally heighten the sanctity and deepen the faith of people in Yadagirigutta.

According to the new plans, the temple's main *gopuram* (tower) will be raised from the current 22 feet to 40 feet, and will be plated with gold while its walls will be rebuilt with granite to highlight the temple's vintage—it finds mention in the Puranas and manuscripts dating back to 1130 AD.

KCR SEEKS HIS TIRUMALA

In a grand mix of statecraft and religion, the Telangana CM plans a mega-makeover for a little-known temple near Hyderabad to rival Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh

STARK CONTRAST The Yadadri temple is dwarfed by the riches



ANANDASAI'S ARTISTIC IMPRESSION OF YADADRI POST-MAKEOVER; (INSET) THE TIRUMALA TEMPLE

Revenue

The revenue of the Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirumala was Rs 2,262.52 crore in 2014-15; for Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in Yadadri, Rs 73.31 crore.

Wait for darshan

Six hours if one buys an entry ticket for Rs 50 and 90 minutes for a Rs 300 ticket in Tirumala. In Yadadri, an hour-long wait with a Rs 50 ticket and 30 minutes with a Rs 100 ticket.



Although the state has provided Rs 200 crore and pledged another Rs 100 crore each year for the next three years, more funds are needed to realise KCR's grand vision. For that he is hopeful of generous grants from corporate entities. An estimated Rs 1,500 crore is needed to develop the core of the temple town. On September 6, Silicon Valley entrepreneur and Sify Technologies Chairman Ananta Koti Raju Vegesna through his Raju Vegesna Foundation has pledged Rs 5 crore as the first tranche to develop infrastructure. KCR expects more such donations to come soon.

However, it's the construction

more than the cost that seems daunting. Respecting traditional practices would require the nod of Hindu religious heads. If changes are to be effected along traditional lines, spiritual leaders conversant with *agama shastras* (ancient practices related to temple architecture and worship) have to be consulted. That is why KCR has turned to Sri Sri Sri Tridandi Chinna Srimannarayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, a highly revered pontiff and preacher of the Vaishnava cult, to take the final call. The temple has reportedly been renamed Yadadri on Jeeyar Swami's suggestion. KCR has also assigned Anandasai, a follower of Jeeyar Swami and an art director in Telugu films who is also designing a Shirdi Sai Baba temple in New Jersey, to redesign the temple premises.

Even as the final plans are being readied, KCR has given the go-ahead to develop the areas downhill. Land acquisition has already begun in six villages of Yadagirigutta and Bhongir mandals in Nalgonda. For pilgrim management, the Tirumala practices are being closely studied to avoid mistakes in Yadadri. "For a smooth entry and exit, we will have two sets of ramps with pedestrian walkways," says G.A. Raj Expedith, landscape architect and acoustics consultant. Within the temple, several changes relating to pilgrim practices are being made. The "break *darshan*" for some privileged pilgrims, raising the fee for special *darshan* and offering a bigger *laddu* for a higher price—a norm in Tirumala over the years—are already in place. The price of *darshan* tickets has increased much before any of the proposed projects have materialised. "We expect the revenues to cross Rs 100 crore for 2015-16 considering that the number of pilgrims has gone up from 5,000 to 10,000 on weekdays and from 20,000 to 50,000 on weekends," says the temple's Executive Officer, N. Geeta Reddy.

Major changes are what the CM is also hoping to bring in with his grand plans but can the tools of statecraft transform a place of worship in scale and stature? Perhaps, although matching Tirumala measure for measure is a different question altogether.

Follow the writer on Twitter @AmarnathKMemon

of the Sri Venkateswara temple

Hundi income

Rs 907 crore in Tirumala;
Rs 11.11 crore in Yadadri.

Area in and around

the shrine 3.45 acres
in Tirumala; 4.5 acres in
Yadadri after the makeover.

Average draw

85,000 a
day during
weekends
in Tirumala,
50,000 in
Yadadri.



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RAJE'S ROYAL CHALLENGE

CM Vasundhara Raje's bill for conservation of private heritage properties sparks protests from erstwhile royals who fear government intrusion and acquisitions

By Rohit Parihar

The former royals and thakurs of Rajasthan are up in arms against the government's decision to introduce the Rajasthan Heritage Conservation Bill, 2015, a brainchild of Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, herself an erstwhile maharani of Dholpur and princess of Gwalior. The bill gives immense power to a proposed heritage authority, and a heritage council constituted under it, to take over any private property that has heritage value to maintain it properly. What has shocked stakeholders is that it allows the authority to immediately acquire a property, if it so wishes, making an exception to a two-month notice provided for in the bill. It also allows the entry of a person deputed to carry out any prescribed work inside the monument—all they need to do is give a 24-hour notice.

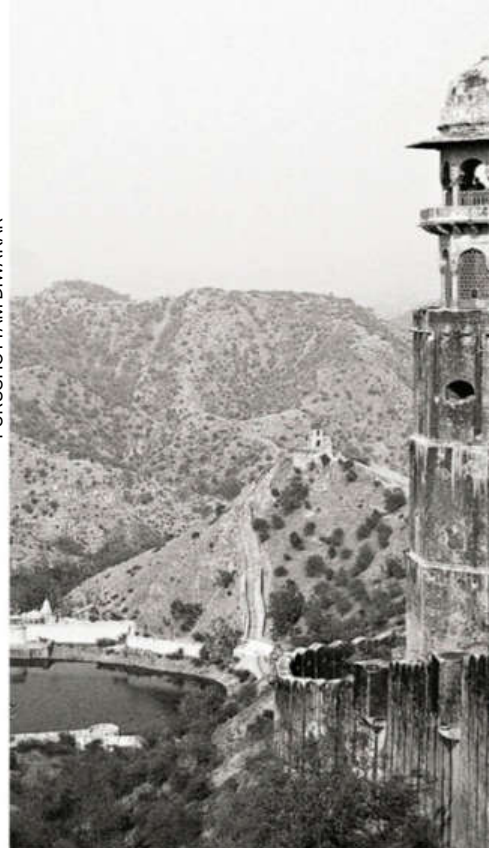
Rajasthan has thousands of such private properties and the fact that the bill makes no distinction between those that are in a dilapidated state and those that are being maintained well has made stakeholders worried about its possible misuse by politicians and by parties with vested interests. As Randhir Vikram Singh, general secretary of Indian Heritage Hotels Association, points out, "We agree that some heritage assets require maintenance. But the bill makes no distinction between properties that are being looked after well or the ones that need government intervention."

The controversial bill was tabled in the state Assembly on April 9 and, without any debate, referred to a select committee. On September 1, the committee—chaired by Rajasthan's Minister for Urban Development and Housing Rajpal Singh Shekhawat and which includes members such as the erstwhile ruler of Bharatpur and Congress MLA Vishvendra Singh and Jaipur princess and BJP MLA Diya Kumari—met stakeholders, including erstwhile royals Arvind Singh Mewar of Udaipur, Gaj Singh of Jodhpur and Randhir Vikram Singh of Mandawa. "It is a draconian law in the making," said Vishvendra Singh at the meeting, and the general consensus was that the bill should either be abandoned or overhauled through major amendments.

The strong opposition from the royals has forced the government to rethink its decision. It is now in two minds about tabling it during the upcoming assembly session that begins on September 16.

Raje, given her royal background, takes immense interest in the conservation and development of heritage properties. During her previous tenure that ended in 2008, she launched a pilot project to turn the Amber Fort into a more tourist-friendly place and reopened several parts of the fort that were earlier off-limits for visitors. She had also introduced a bill that would allow the private sector to adopt state-owned monuments; but this was met with resistance within the government and the bill was ultimately abandoned. In contrast, the present heritage bill

PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR



THE JAIGARH FORT IN JAIPUR AND THE CITY PALACE THAT ARE IN EXCELLENT SHAPE; THE GOVERNMENT-

“

The bill is draconian and is open to misuse and abuse, including for political vendetta. Under this, any property can be given heritage status, thus facilitating its takeover.



VISHVENDRA SINGH

Congress MLA, erstwhile maharaja of Bharatpur

has excluded all state-owned properties and covers only private ones, causing concern among owners who fear that their rights to ownership of land and property might be in jeopardy.

The bill, on the face of it, runs contrary to the efforts of previous governments, including Raje's, to offer its heritage properties, not monuments, to the private sector either by leasing them out or through public-private partnership. Most such efforts have failed because of the huge amount of money that investors are expected to pay to the state. Royals have for a while now been demanding that dilapidated properties be offered to



PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR

WHY THE BILL HAS MET WITH OPPOSITION

- The definition of heritage assets and their declaration as protected monuments is open-ended, leaving it to the authorities' discretion to include any private asset within its fold without a reference to its present usage status.
- The bill forces any agreement on the private owner without specifying compensation and income, is silent about heritage properties including covenant ones already being used as hotels, museums.
- It entitles entry of a deputed person into a heritage premises for various works.
- The bill bars judicial recourse in civil courts.

IN UDAIPUR (BOTTOM RIGHT) ARE PRIVATELY OWNED HERITAGE PROPERTIES IN RAJASTHAN
MANAGED BHOPALGARH FORT IN KHETRI (TOP RIGHT) IS IN RUINS



At a time when the government can't fund the heritage properties that it already owns, why does the bill focus on properties that are being maintained well?

GAJ SINGH

Erstwhile maharaja of Jodhpur



Covenant properties should be excluded. Bar on civil courts' jurisdiction must be done away with.

DIYA KUMARI

BJP MLA and daughter of erstwhile maharaja of Jaipur, Sawai Bhawani Singh



It will lead to huge litigation issues. How would the government compensate a 400-year-old palace? Owners of heritage properties are worried about this uncalled-for bill.

ARVIND SINGH MEWAR

Erstwhile maharaja of Udaipur

their erstwhile owners or those running heritage hotels, whose main aim is preservation of the properties rather than earning profits.

That is why the bill in its present form has raised serious doubt about the government's intention—whether it is actually aiming to protect heritage buildings or if it is using the bill as a tool to target some royal houses to acquire their assets and hand it over to the corporate sector, including other erstwhile royals. Those at the receiving end complain that the bill, instead of specifying the state's role to help owners of private heritage properties, is more focused on the regulatory

and acquisition mechanism, for which there are already several laws in place.

There will be legal problems as well. As Arvind Singh Mewar points out, "There will be lot of litigation issues involved in the acquisition of these properties—they have been owned for generations and nobody will allow the state to easily acquire them for a compensation that can't be quantified for heritage assets." Diya Kumari, meanwhile, has demanded that the bill should exclude covenant properties—these are properties which were listed as privately owned in the agreement reached between the Union of India and the princely states

during Independence. Owners of heritage hotels are also worried. Indian Heritage Hotels Association President Gaj Singh of Jodhpur points out that heritage hotels were already contributing a lot to tourism and the economy of the state and should have been excluded from the bill.

Urban Development Minister Shekhawat, who took over after the draft was ready, has promised that the government would revisit the bill with an open mind. "Owners have expressed concern about possession rights; we will see if the bill has to be redrafted or clauses amended," he says.

Follow the writer on Twitter @rohit0

THE WAR THAT ALMOST

Its tremendous sweep and meticulous detailing of bayonet duels, tank battles and air combat



The Monsoon War
by Amarinder Singh
and Lt General
Tajinder Shergill
Roli Books
Pages 536
Price Rs 1,995



IAF MEN
ATOP THE
PAKISTANI
SHERMAN
TANK

By Sandeep Unnithan

India's conflict with Pakistan in 1965 is forever destined to be the forgotten war. It was chronologically trapped between the Indian Army's bitter defeat in the 1962 border war with China and its victory over Pakistan in 1971, subjects which have lent themselves to far more wordage in military writing. The drab Ministry of Defence account (Natraj publishers, 2011) and then army commander Lt General Harbaksh Singh's scathing *War Despatches* (Lancer, 1991) are the only two notable versions.

Writing about a war where both sides claim victory is a challenge. *The Monsoon War*, a painstakingly researched book by Amarinder Singh and Lt General Tajinder Shergill (retired), revisits this stalemate to conclude just how close Pakistan's army was to utter, complete defeat.

The war seemed good for Pakistan's military ruler Field Marshal Ayub Khan. The Pakistani army's incursions into Kutch in April 1965 led him to believe that India would succumb to military pressure and that Kashmir was ripe for the picking. The result: a multi-stage offensive, first using disguised infiltrators—surprisingly, a brainchild of his Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—and, after its failure, a full-scale military assault by the Pakistani war machine bolstered by US-supplied tanks and jets. The hitch: Ayub, like Lt General Brij Mohan Kaul, an infamous commander of the 1962 war, had spent the Second World War staying out of harm's way. He believed Bhutto's assertions that the people of Kashmir would rise in revolt and that China would come to Pakistan's aid. The 'pacifist soldier's' military inexperience cost the Pakistani army dearly and led it to the brink.

BROKE PAKISTAN

make the *The Monsoon War* among the most exhaustive accounts of the 1965 war



AMARINDER SINGH

WRITING ABOUT A WAR WHERE BOTH SIDES CLAIM VICTORY IS A CHALLENGE. THE BOOK REVISITS THIS STALEMATE TO CONCLUDE JUST HOW CLOSE PAKISTAN'S ARMY WAS TO UTTER, COMPLETE DEFEAT.

When the war ended on September 22, the Pakistani army had just one armoured division of the three it began the war with. The bulk of their US-supplied Patton tanks were shot to pieces in some of the largest tank battles after the Second World War. Some tank regiments had ceased to exist with even reserves destroyed in battle by a reinvigorated Indian military machine.

Amarinder and Shergill use an interesting source from across the border for a mirror image of military operations on the Pakistani side: a controversial 2002 Pakistani account, *The Illusion of Victory* by Lt General Mahmud Ahmed, with its self-explanatory title.

Amarinder Singh, a politician and military historian, was a veteran of the 1965 war with a unique ringside perch. As a young captain, he was the ADC to Lt General Harbaksh Singh, the Western Army commander under

whose direction the army fought the war—from the icy heights of Kargil to the deserts of Rajasthan. The book is a military historian's delight. Its tremendous sweep, packed with maps and rare photographs, takes you through the conflict from its start in the wastelands of Kutch to the outskirts of Lahore. Its meticulous detailing of bayonet duels, tank battles and air combat make it among the most exhaustive accounts of the war.

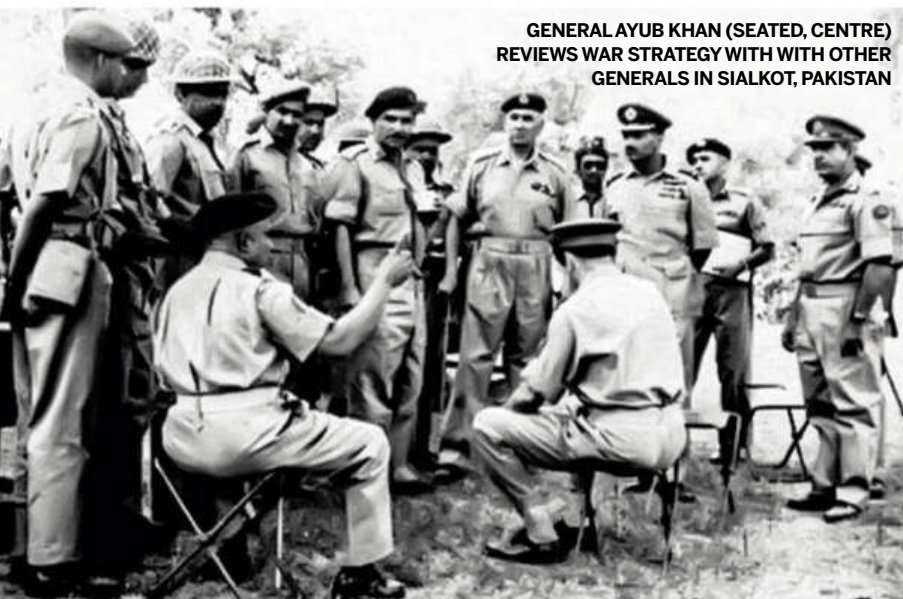
The authors courageously pin some of the mistakes made by the Indian Army on to Lt General Harbaksh, to whom the book is dedicated. Some of these included the Indian Army's inflexibility: it lost a possible strategic victory in Pakistani Punjab because Indian tanks did not move after scoring a decisive victory at Phillora. The army focused on capturing villages rather than destroying the enemy's war potential, commanders squabbled with each other and failed to build up an accurate estimate of Pakistan's tank losses. The what-ifs of this war will be endlessly debated for all time to come. But then, such is the nature of all inconclusive wars.

EXCERPT

Higher Direction of War

It was on 3 September that the higher direction of war was formalised by the Prime Minister (Lal Bahadur) Shastri. In all Indian government publications till today, the higher direction of war in 1965 remains unwritten. Its origins possibly lay in government thinking in the process leading to the Kutch Accord in June 1965. According to A.G. Noorani, quoting from the 'The British Papers, Secret and Confidential, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh Documents 1958-1969', compiled and selected by Roedad Khan, he writes that John Freeman, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom at New Delhi, reported a conversation to London that he had had with L.K. Jha, Private Secretary to Prime Minister Shastri, 'Jha added that an invasion of West Pakistan, which was originally intended as a fairly small-scale, retaliatory operation, was ready to be launched if the Kutch agreement had not been signed when it was. The D-Day for the operation was 3 July. In other words, Shastri gave the Pakistanis one week after an agreement was reached in London to sign the document.' One does wonder at the truth in this reported conversation however if D-Day was to have been 3 July 1965. I Corps would not have been ready to launch and armoured operations by either side would have been severely restricted in Punjab because of the monsoon. The 'fairly small-scale, retaliatory operation' seems to have found a place in later higher direction of war thinking.

It seems that the higher direction of war by the Government of India was decided upon later than plans hammered out for the Western Command Theatre and would have been based upon the strategic thinking of the defence forces and the political overtones of the government. Pakistan's Operation Gibraltar was by then a failure and Operation Grand Slam, launched on 1 September 1965, was in full flow in the Chhamb Sector and the Government of India had ordered the COAS (Chief of Army Staff) to take the war across the International Boundary to Pakistan. According to R.D. Pradhan's understanding of the higher direction of war in *In The Indo-Pak War of 1965*, gleaned from the diaries of Y.B. Chavan, the then Minister of Defence, it was decided on 3 September 1965, at a meeting called by Prime Minister Shastri, with the Defence Minister Chavan, General J.N. Chaudhuri, the Chief of Army Staff and Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, the Chief of Air Staff. The direction was as follows:



GENERAL AYUB KHAN (SEATED, CENTRE)
REVIEWS WAR STRATEGY WITH OTHER
GENERALS IN SIALKOT, PAKISTAN

'TO OCCUPY MINIMUM TERRITORY' WAS A STRANGE CAVEAT TO BE APPLIED TO THE LAUNCHING OF OPERATIONS INTO PAKISTAN.

- To defend against Pakistan's attempts to grab Kashmir by force and to make it abundantly clear that Pakistan would never be allowed to wrest Kashmir from India.
- To destroy the offensive power of Pakistan's armed forces.
- To occupy only minimum Pakistani territory, necessary to achieve these purposes, which would be vacated after a satisfactory conclusion of the war. C.P. Shrivastava, who was an aide to Prime Minister Shastri from 1964 to his tragic death, makes the same observations on the war objectives directed by the Prime Minister, in his book *Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India, 1964-1966*, A

Life of Truth in Politics. He adds that the Prime Minister requested Arjan Singh to ensure there was no bombing of civilian areas in Pakistan.

'To occupy minimum territory' was a strange caveat to be applied to the launching of operations into Pakistan and it is surprising the Chief of Army Staff and the Chief of Air Staff agreed to this curb. In the effort to 'destroy the offensive power of Pakistan's armed forces,' it would have been difficult to so tailor offensive operations in a manner that both destruction of enemy forces and occupation of minimum territory would result. This was perhaps a political overtone to satisfy global opinion and also to restrict the scale of conflict.

The division was to concentrate in the Bajpur area on the Pathankot-Jammu road, near Samba. The division began to move its advance parties and the first tank train, a squadron of Poona Horse was loaded by 1600 hours and moved the same night. For the 43 Lorried Brigade concentration areas, 2 Lancers were moved

on tank transporters whereas 62 Cavalry moved directly there. By 2000 hours on 4 September, Poona Horse had concentrated 6 miles west of Madhopur on the Pathankot-Jammu road. On the same night at about 2200 hours, Sowar Ranjit Singh, B Squadron, on extra regimental employment with 1 Armoured Brigade as a motorcycle despatch rider, was ambushed and killed on the Samba-Jammu road near Supwal by Pakistani infiltrators who burnt his motorcycle and took away his despatches. The infiltrators must have sent the despatches up the command channel, but it does not appear they reached the Pakistani 6 Armoured Division or 15 Infantry Division and alerted them to the presence of 1 Armoured Division. In fact on 4 September, Colonel S.G. Mehdi, CGS (Colonel General Staff) of the Pakistani 15 Infantry Division had called Lieutenant Colonel Sher Zaman of the Pakistani MI (Military Intelligence) Directorate and told him that they had caught despatches carried by a despatch rider of the Indian squadron

headquarters of 1 Armoured Brigade, that showed that 1 Armoured Division was in the vicinity of Samba, probably to launch an offensive. However, the despatch rider was ambushed on the night of 4 September; Colonel Mehdi must have spoken to Lieutenant Colonel Sher Zaman on 5 September, not on the 4th. Both the Pakistani divisions made no change in deployments, particularly in armour, to anticipate an offensive by 1 Armoured Division in that area. It is likely that the Pakistan high command still believed that India would not open a second front and this attitude had percolated down to the entire Pakistani Army. ■

A TARNISHED MIRROR TO OUR TIMES

Jonathan Franzen's new novel is funny and endearing despite an unconvincing protagonist

By Chiki Sarkar



Purity
by Jonathan Franzen
Fourth Estate
Pages 576
Price Rs 799

Jonathan Franzen's *Purity* is about a young woman's search for her father. All books have a shape, and *Purity*, like Franzen's previous novels, is like a chain of interlocking stories; each part told by a different person, each part adding to our understanding of two central events—a marriage and a murder. All roads of course lead to the missing parent—the grain of this quest.

But not all these strands are interesting—though many are—nor are they as vital to the enterprise as they appear to be. Franzen is at his least convincing around the novel's most colourful and ambitious figure, Andreas Wolf. A Julian Assange-like figure, Wolf is handsome, compelling and damaged and has a mysterious connection to Pip's quest. A new-age messiah, he runs an online whistle-blowing organisation in South America peopled with bright young things who are beautiful, immaculately schooled and filled with the idealistic zeal especially about him.

Through Wolf and his world, Franzen evokes some of the currents of our times—of WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden, of online journalism and the Occupy movement, coating it with satire while making some arresting points about the problems of accumulating and exposing secrets (amplified in the age of internet), and the similarities between an organisation such as WikiLeaks and the manner in which authoritarian governments shore up information about their citizens.

It's clever and au courant, yes, but Franzen never really delves beyond the surface (can one with a character like Wolf?) and as a result the messiah (and the many plots he drives in the novel) never wholly convinces while the larger, genuinely interesting arguments feel like appendages to the storytelling. Franzen's voice, naturally ironic—and sometimes grating in its knowingness—is also at its least attractive when it describes a character as hollow as Wolf. Two



JONATHAN FRANZEN

bits of glibness don't sadly make a plus and it serves to make *Purity* a tarnished mirror to our times. It's tough for a novel to be a book of the moment (nothing dates you quicker) and this one seems to try and fail too hard.

But *Purity* shines in other, more universal, ways. In his portrayal of most of the other characters and their relationships, Franzen's satire turns into something acute and tender. His portrait of Pip and her mother, two lonesome, co-dependent women is funny and raw and right. So are the accounts of journalist Tom Aberrant's (in whose Denver offices Pip ends up in) tormented marriage with his ex-wife and fraying but loving relationship with his current partner.

Franzen is very, very good on messy relationships, their tensions, pressure points and power currents, and he never lets us forget that underneath the ugliness between two people, there is often deep love. He also does bad sex better than anyone else—in his hands, intercourse often becoming a terrain for rich comedy. There was the memorable scene in *Freedom* and there are plenty here, my favourite being when a virginal Tom mistakenly has anal sex with an unsuspecting girlfriend.

The non-Wolf characters are on the whole thus sympathetic and likeable and in their company Franzen's relentless irony softens and the coincidences, melodrama, and slight craziness of the plot seem like great fun. And because the girl and her quest and the family she eventually finds are so winning, *Purity* is ultimately a funny, endearing novel whose ambitions don't get too much in the way.

Chiki Sarkar is a publisher based in India

Graphic by NAOREM SANJOY SINGH

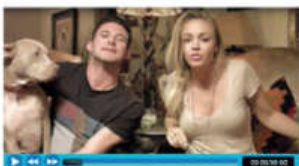
MAIL MANIA

The average white-collar worker checks his/her email for six hours a day. Here's what people are also doing while checking their mail.

*Respondents opted for multiple options
Source: Adobe
Last Updated: September 2015



viral video



More than 2 million people laughed at couple Justin and Jill's drunk retelling of how they met.



Comedian Stephen Colbert and US Vice President Joe Biden's discussion on bravely facing family tragedy moved 1.7 million.



More than a million netizens watched a toddler's reaction on seeing her father after her first day at school.

web wow

The Next Selfie Champion?

Bhanu Prakash Racha quit his job as a research assistant in a hospital in Hyderabad to fulfil his dream—to hold the world records for clicking the most number of selfies in an hour. The 24-year-old plans to click 1,800 selfies in 60 minutes and thereby beat American football star Patrick Peterson's record of 1,449 selfies. Racha bought a selfie stick to prepare for the feat. He's also doing wrist exercises.



web lol

Cold Humour



As news broke that Coldplay was in India to shoot a music video, comedian Kanan Gill decided to have some fun at the expense of All India Bakchod (AIB). Gill began trolling AIB on Twitter and announced that AIB and Coldplay were collaborating on a project. He even photo-shopped a picture of lead vocalist Chris Martin to make it appear as if he was working with AIB. Gill's tricks paid off as journalists started calling to confirm the news.

what's new App Alert

Camera + a photo taking/editing tool that uses features such as HDR+, Lens Blur, Wide Angle.



ListaPost lets you save your favourite Instagram posts into customs lists.



net fail

Unfair Play

BBC News (UK) @BBCNews
Hingis wins US Open doubles title bbc.in

Hetal @Wseywoman

@BBCNews Dear Sir/Madam,
How can one woman win doubles?
1:49 AM - 14 Sep 2015

It looks like the BBC thinks doubles tennis matches can be won single-handedly. At least that's what it seemed like when it congratulated Martina Hingis on her win at the US Open on Twitter but left out her doubles partner Sania Mirza. Indians have reacted strongly, calling the news channel ignorant.

twitter tattle

Different Shades of Grey



@50NerdsOfGrey is a Twitter account parodying the erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*, replacing sensual scenes with nerdy situations. For instance, one of the tweets reads: She said she was turned on by men who took risks. So he took the plastic off his iPhone screen. The Twitter handle has more than 74,000 followers.

pixel perfect

Copycat Parents



Like most college kids, Emily Musson, a student from New York City, loves taking selfies, especially with her boyfriend Johnny. Her pictures on Facebook inspired none other than her parents, who decided to express their love the same way as their daughter. Married for 28 years, Emily's parents recreated the pictures copying the poses.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Ikummi

THE ART OF INFORMATION

When statistics, annotations, archives, journalism and data start entering art works, it's time to question art. But is it reflective of the age we live in?

By Gayatri Jayaraman

Marcel Duchamp, who said art, like electricity, cannot be defined and can be called a kind of inner current in a human being, way back in the 1960s, would have been proud. There is nothing retinal about the new art of the information age.

Curious hybrids peculiarly held together with barbed wire emerge from Reena Kallat's first solo in seven years. The *Palm-Oak* are, separately, trees considered national symbols of strength in Cuba, and across its hitherto embargoed border, in the United States. Together, they should, ideally, invoke a dual strength. But they are bound together by an electrical wire twisted into a barbed fence. That which should enable communication also facilitates separation. And lines that divide, must inevitably unite through this new communication-obsessed age. From these partitioned lives of nation-owned symbols, Kallat creates an entirely new and awkward species of animals, birds, trees and flowers. This is who we are now, she seems to say. These half-people, these half-things, neither here nor there, made sacred to a new age in an elephant-head-on-a-boy's-body kind of way. There is a macabre edge Kallat has acquired to her seemingly innocuous half-bodies. In *Anatomy of Distance*, two cables twist together to form a spinal cord in the shape of the LoC. In *Siamese Trees and Half*

HEMA UPADHYAY'S
'FISH IN A DEAD LANDSCAPE'

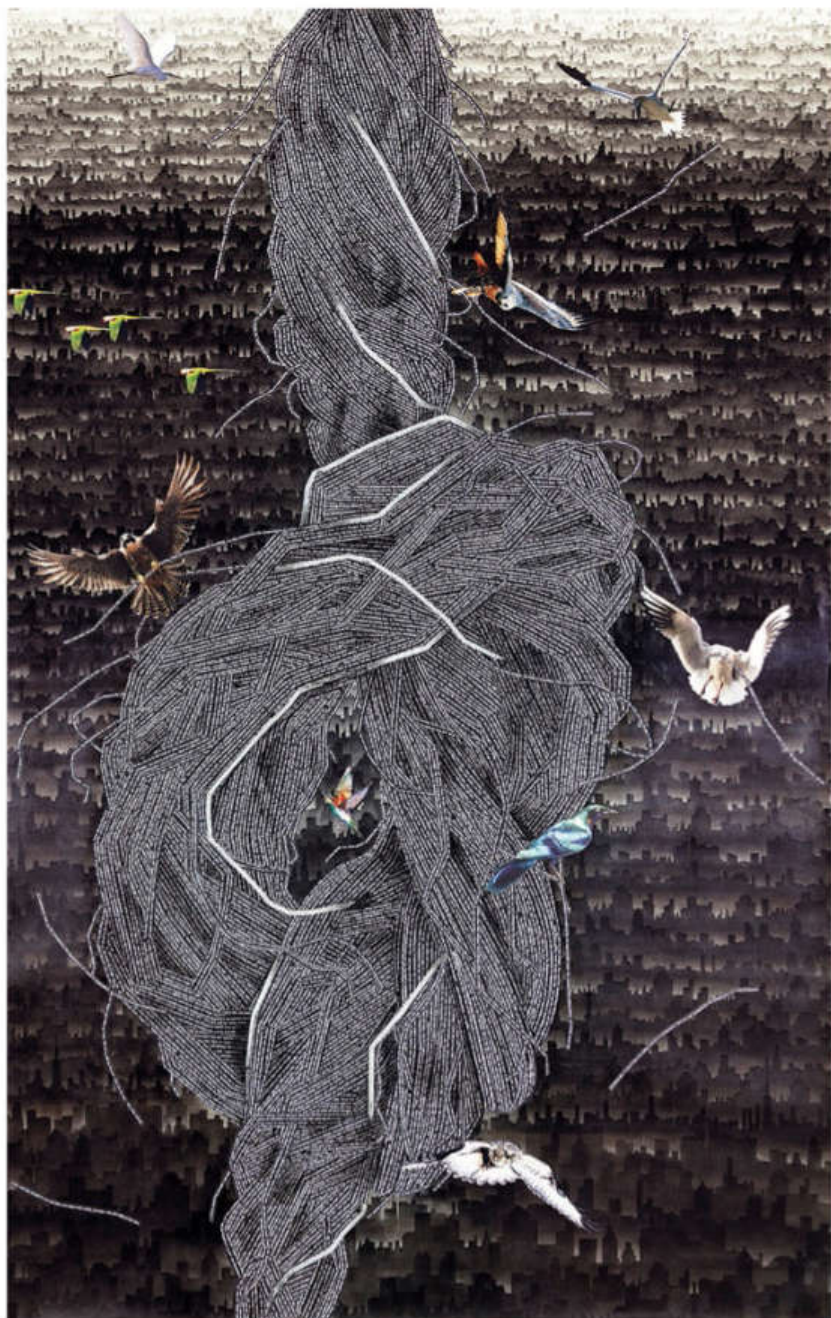


Image courtesy ANIL RANE

THE ARTS



FROM REENA KALLAT'S FIRST SOLO IN SEVEN YEARS, THE 'PALM-OAK'



'AUTODIDACT'S TRANSPORT' BY RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE

Oxygen, the banyan, India's national tree, intertwines with the deodar, Pakistan's national tree, in an almost wistful interplay that wishes we were one, but to know that the only way we will be is in a weird hybrid.

These coming together are not whimsically artistic. They are an attempt at bilateral commentary. Kallat does not operate in the ideal. She does not wish for a happy hand-holding. She does not apportion blame. There are two clear sides to each divide, and as far as objectivity goes, she is careful to sit, painfully sometimes, on that barbed fence.

Kallat's show is a culmination of a process of journalistic inquiry that has been seven years in the making. At her Bandra studio in Mumbai are the tell-tale ruins of her notations: newspaper clippings, links, books, travels, anything that could introduce her to the absurdities and peculiarities of nation states. "My work addresses the gap between what is perceived as ideal and what exists," Kallat explains.

The process is one that contemporary artists are increasingly adopting, to some criticism. Is the resulting work too dense? How much data should be filtered into the final work? And is the role of art to give you information?

At the other end of town, at the Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, curator Ranjit Hoskote is unpacking the late Jehangir Sabavala's bequest to The Museum. Sabavala, equally political as an artist, influenced by Indian

nationalism, Japanese culture and the historical contexts of Buddhism, spoke of the violence of his times. Tyeb Mehta, deeply scarred by communal violence of Partition and the post-Babri Masjid riots, was equally so in his own manner. But the idiom of a previous generation of artists was to elevate and mutate the source data to a subtext of influence. This again differs from inquiry like that of the Delhi-based Amit Mehra and Veer Munshi's *Kashmir Insider/Outsider* at Sakshi Art Gallery, which serves as a photo-journalistic exploration of one subject. For an emerging body of contemporary art work, in contrast, the pivot is the data, which, when manipulated into the art work, shares equal footing with it. It is in many ways, this turn to fact, data, an artistic reaction to the overwhelming fanaticism of opinion.

For Shilpa Gupta's just-concluded *My East is Your West* exhibit at the Venice Biennale, the Dhakai Jamdani sari she used had been physically traded to India from Dhaka via Assam. Gupta spent four years studying the trans-border trade, making frequent visits, speaking to BSF personnel and smugglers, tradesmen and locals on either side. Its result is a sari wrapped around a pole. "From me to you, I have to defragment myself. The sari is shredded and wrapped again on a long pole. Originally it is there, but it has to transform itself,"

she explains. In her performance booth for the exhibit 998.9, a pile of cloth 3,395 metres long, handwoven from Phulia, symbolised the length of what will be the world's longest border fence when completed. Those who exited the exhibit received sealed envelopes with torn bits of photocopies of the agreement on cross-border enclaves. The physical presence of data points is becoming crucial to what the work is saying.

Hema Upadhyay, who sourced much readymade imagery for her *Fish In a Dead Landscape*, explained it thus: "In this age of image and information, metaphors are easy because their belonging has become so universal, so the work does allow this metaphysical reading, accepting or rejecting an idea." Jitish Kallat's solo *The Infinite Episode*, at Galerie Daniel Templon in Paris, explores time and space through food, but the work is essentially physical: metabolic, scientific and elemental. His *Public Notice* series interplays with figures, dates and names from the World Parliament of Religions to the Dandi March to the Gujarat riots, making each of the data points crucial bricks to the concluding work. In this genre, it is Atul Dodiya who has been imbuing his inquiry with an essential elevation. In his *Mahatma and the Masters*, he explores the changing contexts of Gandhi through a combination of photography and oils, juxtaposing Independence and European



SHILPA GUPTA'S 'SOMEONE ELSE'

modernism. His previous exhibit *7000 Museums: A Project for the Republic of India*, while drawing from Arun Kolatkar, Lucio Fontana, and Joseph Beuys—elevated the data to make it his own. From CAMP (Critical Art and Media Practice), a Mumbai studio set up in 2007 by Bandra-based Shaina Anand and Ashok Sukumaran, came in April this year questions of a post-Snowden world in *As If-IV*, much of it falling under the category of ‘surveillance art’. In *Four Letter Film*, a stolen telephone conversation is beamed on a wall outside a house in New Delhi. Their *From Gulf to Gulf*, exhibited at the Mumbai Film Festival, the Sharjah Biennale, the BFI London Film Festival and Venice Biennale, was done in collaboration with Kutchi seamen, and used mobile phone footage of life on the seas from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Aden. Yet, in an example of how the freshness of data used in this form of art interferes with the larger process, CAMP’s Radia Tapes installation *Pal, Pal, Pal, Pal...* for instance, although shortlisted for the Skoda Prize in 2012, worked only for those who had not heard the original, and some argue, it has failed to outlive the particulars of the event.

How much, then, should an art work depend on data and text?

Cultural theorist Girish Shahane broadly classifies it as ‘text-based art’ sparked by the selection of artists for the 2002 Documenta, curated by Okwui Enwezor. “His picks

THE DATA ARTISTS

REENA KALLAT

Exhibits **Hyphenated Lives, Visas to Happiness, Measurement from Evaporating Oceans, Anatomy of Distance**

Data drug **Migration, place names, wars, conflict, partition issues**

SHILPA GUPTA

Exhibits **My East is Your West, A Century of Centuries, Troubling Borders**

Data drug **Indian borders, porousness of the human condition, people’s names, finiteness of statistics**

CAMP

(Critical Art & Media Practice)

Exhibits **‘As If’ series, The Neighbour Before the House, From Gulf to Gulf, Archive Practicum, Pad.ma, their digital media archive**

Data drug **Mobile and CCTV captures, phone taps, forgotten archives, leaks, migration and border issues**

RAQs MEDIA COLLECTIVE

Exhibits **Unregistered Afternoon and the 36 Planes of Emotion, Marks, Blackboard Economy, Corrections to the First Draft of History, A Log Book Entry Before a Storm, Meanwhile Elsewhere**

Data drug **Text, words, dichotomies of time, inadequacies of the written version**

shocked the art world then,” says Shahane. They were documentary filmmaker Amar Kanwar, photographer Ravi Agarwal and the RAQs Media Collective, not till then identified as artists. It is now, with master artists playing the strokes, that information art is becoming a full-fledged movement.

Criticisms include that the politics of such art is essentially Left-wing, and that it introduces a class system into a visual medium that is otherwise a level playing field to artists who originate from all classes—which is what made an M.F. Husain an equal to an Akbar Padamsee, or that created a Subodh Gupta and a Sudarshan Shetty. Secondly, if the art work relies on data for its value, does the milling of data which is not essentially new or fresh diminish the work? And third, if data in journalism or any other fact-driven field is subject to rigour in sourcing and validating, should the critical review of the work also be subject to the accuracy of its facts, or should the overall value of the work supersede the component data? These questions, say artists and curators, are still up in the air. If anything, it is these questions the art works seek to answer.

The new texture and fabric of contemporary art is not physical. It is data. If information is the material of the age, then by default, that is the material their work becomes composed of.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri_J

THE GREAT INDIA

We are a nation that loves to play mind games with itself, sometimes erasing the past, often changing facts with fiction, and always



Mahatma Gandhi

60 roads named after him across India. His birthday, October 2, is a national holiday. The Indian currency carries his image. His death anniversary, January 30, is observed as Martyrs' Day.



Jawaharlal Nehru

96 government schemes, institutes, roads named after the first PM.



Indira Gandhi

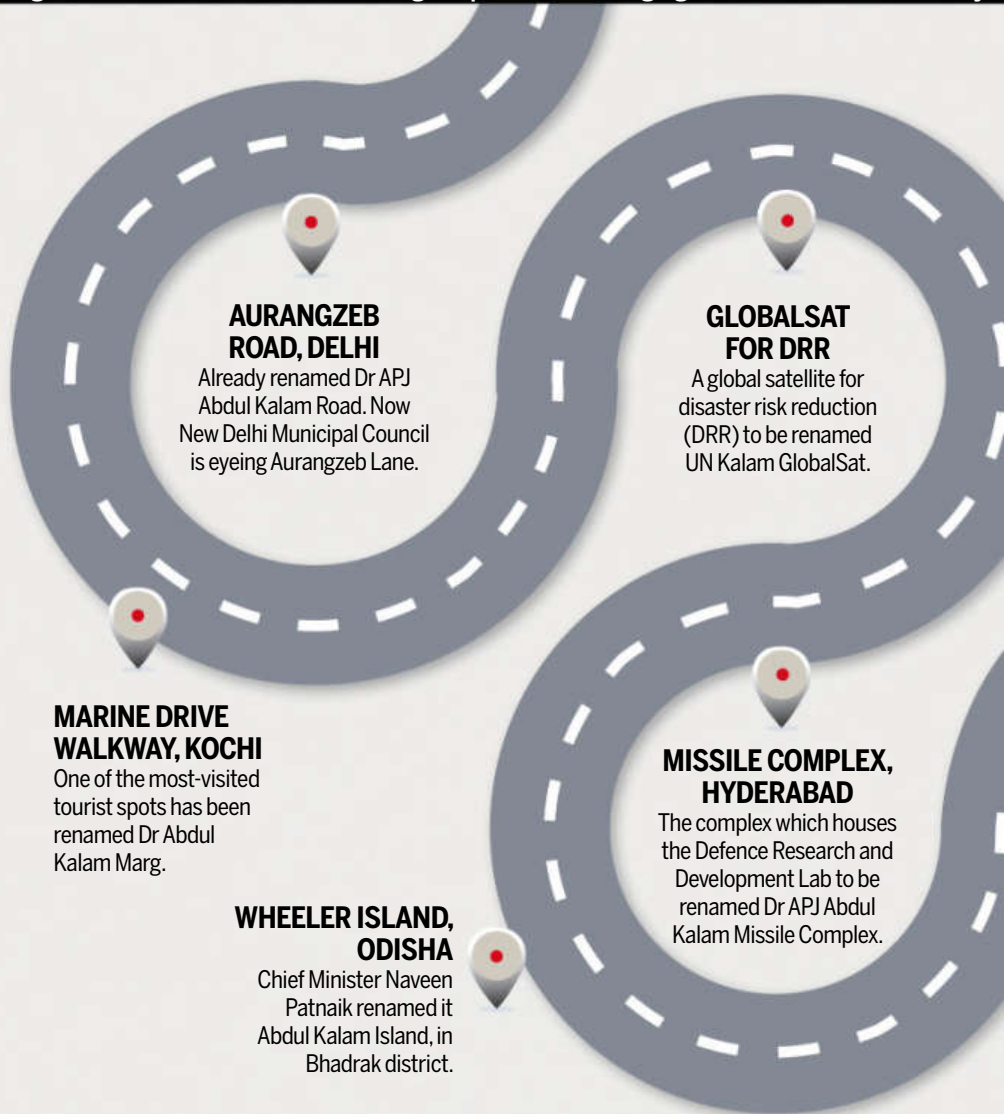
132 projects named after the fifth prime minister, including a calf-rearing scheme.



Rajiv Gandhi

209 projects named after the ninth PM of which 31 are related to sports and 57 to education.

(Source: From text of complaint made to the Chief Election Commissioner of India by Dr A. Surya Prakash in 2009. This list mostly includes projects, schemes and institutions funded by the Union and state governments. There are scores of other institutes named after them in towns and cities of India.)



AURANGZEB ROAD, DELHI

Already renamed Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road. Now New Delhi Municipal Council is eyeing Aurangzeb Lane.

GLOBALSAT FOR DRR

A global satellite for disaster risk reduction (DRR) to be renamed UN Kalam GlobalSat.

MARINE DRIVE WALKWAY, KOCHI

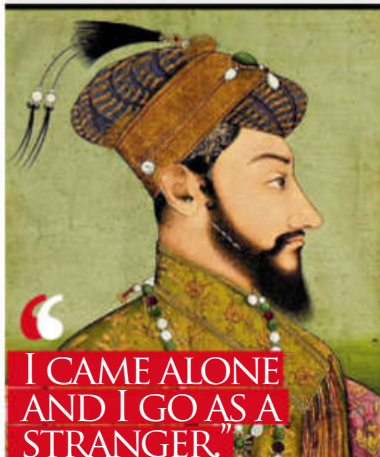
One of the most-visited tourist spots has been renamed Dr Abdul Kalam Marg.

WHEELER ISLAND, ODISHA

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik renamed it Abdul Kalam Island, in Bhadrak district.

MISSILE COMPLEX, HYDERABAD

The complex which houses the Defence Research and Development Lab to be renamed Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex.



**I CAME ALONE
AND I GO AS A
STRANGER."**

NOBODY LOVES AURANGZEB

The sixth Mughal emperor, who rarely lost a battle and under whom the wealth of India continued to be the wonder and envy of other nations, was loved by few—then and now.

FATHER SHAH JAHAN

Mughal emperor Shah Jahan not just favoured first son Dara Shikoh, but also suspected that Aurangzeb's humility to the amirs was a sham, upbraiding him often for his "meekness of spirit", secretive and serious ways.

N MEMORY GAME

changing names, especially of roads, in a bid to show extreme respect to some. Does it matter to the public? Or, do the dead care?

EVERYBODY WANTS A PIECE OF KALAM

Roads to satellites to universities, everything is being named or renamed after one of India's most unpretentious and popular men, the late former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam.

KALAM MUSEUM

Lok Sabha members ask for a museum in Delhi in his memory.

UP TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

CM Akhilesh Yadav announced on Twitter his plan to rename it APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University.

RASHTRIYA AVISHKAR ABHIYAN

The Centre has announced that the innovation scheme will be renamed after the former president.

AURANGABAD CITY, MAHARASHTRA

Kalam is the inspiration behind the Shiv Sena's demand to change the name of the city to Sambhaji Nagar.



“GOODBYES SHOULD BE SHORT, REALLY SHORT.”

THE ELITES

The Shia nobles resented his campaign against Shia kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur. Ulemas disapproved of war against Muslims.

HIS SIBLINGS

Dara and Jahanara hated him. Other Mughal princes also could not relate to his quiet ways. Sister Roshanara, whom he trusted, also betrayed him in the end.

HIS SONS

He always suspected his sons of plotting against him (which they did), periodically imprisoning them.

LOVE OF HIS LIFE

The austere prince fell in love at first sight with musically gifted Hirabai, in Aurangabad. But Hirabai died soon, and he never listened to music again.

THE HINDUS

Hated him, it is said. Yet he had more Hindu nobles than any. If he destroyed temples, he also built some in Ujjain, Chitrakoot, Allahabad.

THE HISTORIANS

For British historians of the Raj and nationalist historians—even scholars like Jadunath Sarkar and R.C. Majumdar—Aurangzeb was the whipping boy.

(Source: Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court: 1707-40*; Reassessing Aurangzeb; M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*; Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*)



NEIGHBOUR WATCH

Momal Sheikh is the latest Pakistani actor to jump on the Bollywood bandwagon. Already familiar to Indian audiences for her part in Zindagi show *Aaina Dulhan Ka*, Sheikh will make her Hindi feature debut in Aanand L. Rai-produced *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* which also stars Abhay Deol and Diana Penty. Unlike her peers, Sheikh isn't completely alien to Bollywood with her father, Javed, having appeared in *Namastey London* and *Om Shanti Om*.



A DIFFERENT PITCH

Somewhere between composing for *Dil Dhadakne Do*, *Katti Batti* and *Mirziya* and touring with partners Ehsaan and Loy, **Shankar Mahadevan** found time to not just sing and compose songs but also star in a Marathi film, *Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*. Mahadevan will make his acting debut in this Marathi musical drama which is based on a rivalry between two classical music *gharanas*.

HOW WAS THE WEEK?



AWESOME
Ruchika Oberoi

The FTII alumna won the FEDORA prize for best young director at Venice Days, a sidebar of the Venice Film Festival, for *Island City*.



SUPER
Leander Paes

Teamed up with Martina Hingis to win the US Open Mixed Doubles title. Paes now holds the record for winning the maximum mixed doubles grand slam titles.

Compiled by **Suhani Singh**
Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

REGIONAL FARE

Filmmaker **Imtiaz Ali** is all set to promote Bengali film, *Teenkahon*, directed by ad filmmaker Bauddhayan Mukherji. Starring actors such as Rituparna Sengupta and Ashish Vidyarthi, the film has been appreciated at international film festivals, winning awards at Kosovo and Jakarta. The film releases in the metros on September 25.



MORE THAN YELLOW



Coldplay fans in Mumbai rejoiced as the rock band shot a music video in the city. The group also got **Sonam Kapoor** to feature in their video which shows them playing Holi. Colourful, yes. Original, not so much given that Major Lazer and M.I.A. have already been there, done that.

ON THE RISE

Unlike many newcomers, **Bhumi Pednekar** hasn't had to wait too long to land a meaty project. The *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* actor, already a top contender for this year's best debut award, will now work in Balaji-produced *Bhoole Se Naam Na Lo Pyaar Ka*, also co-starring Ayushmann Khurrana.





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Photograph courtesy NIVASA

HOME IMPROVEMENT SPECIAL

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The fastest way to transform your turf is through furnishings. We list this season's latest trends

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Apps and websites that help test colours and calculate the costs involved at the click of a button

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Five product designers show that sustainable design can be sexy too

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Don't let the downpour dampen your spirit, make your home monsoon safe with these handy tips



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I Spy

Your guide to the hottest new stores and products

Walls of Fame

With Marshalls recently launching signature wall coverings called Indian Fusion (in collaboration with interior and product designer Krsna Mehta), now your walls will do all the talking. The assortment is designed keeping the Indian vibe and sensibility in mind. The use of colours like bright pink, green and blue adds a spark to the detailed designs reminiscent of our heritage. Apart from the hues, the collection can be digitally created (read customised) to fit the exact dimensions of your wall. Price ₹ 2,280 per sq m
At www.marshallsonline.com

Futuristic Kitchens

Bleu Concepts has introduced an 'interactive kitchen' concept. A part of the kitchen is designed to create a panel system, which can incorporate a TV, laptop, speakers or wifi. Bright shades of blue and yellow give this range a vibrant and young feel. It uses materials like back painted glass and high quality corian counter, while the shutters are painted in high gloss on MDF and the cabinets are high quality MR (moisture resistant) grade plyboard. It also comes equipped with a small bar. Price on request; At www.bleuconcepts.com



Small is Big

Now you can carry your washing machine in your pocket. Haier has unveiled CODO, a portable washing machine that weighs just 200g. Its Squeeze-Wash technology (that uses liquid or powder detergent and 10 ml of water to gently whisk the stained area), removes stains in 30 to 120 seconds. It operates at the rate of 700 beats per minute and operates on three AAA batteries. CODO can support upto 50 washes, depending on the usage, with fully charged batteries.

Price ₹ 3,990

At www.snapdeal.com



New Address ▲

Ratan Jaipur has opened up a new showroom in the heart of south Delhi. Inspired by Rajasthani motifs, on display are a wide range of prints, embroideries and hand embellished home textiles. The brand's mastery over the processes of hand block, screen and digital printing on fabric has evolved in their transfer from textiles to handmade paper products including wine bottle covers, storage boxes and hanging photo frames. Price ₹ 100 to ₹ 75,000

At N-17, N Block Market, GK – I, New Delhi



HOME | LAUNCHES

◀ Ground Reality

Pergo's latest, Original Excellence collection is available in 25 attractive looks. The new range consists of single strip and multi-strip plank pattern with different shades of walnut, merbau, oak, Genuine™ sawcut, Genuine™ wood and Genuine™ rustic surfaces. Designed for handling high wear, it comes with a life-time guarantee for residential usage. The collection is also bacteria resistant. Formats available in this range are 2,050 x 205 x 8 mm, 1,200 x 190 x 8 mm, and 1,200 x 123 x 8 mm. Price ₹ 250 onwards At www.pergo.co.in

Sounds Good ▼

The ZEB-BT6000RUCF, multi-utility multimedia tower speakers, a new launch from Zebronics India has a built in power strip (that allows it to play MP3 audio formats from personal devices such as a PC, DVD player or a TV). Its three-way acoustic design and 25W x 2 output, helps to fill your room with a clear, powerful sound. The speakers also come with a built in Bluetooth that lets you enjoy music wirelessly, a USB slot and MMC/SD card reader and a remote control. Price ₹ 4,560; At www.zebronics.com



A Case of Space ▲

Beyond Designs has launched living and study concepts, ahead of the festive season. On display are suede cushions, leather and teak wood chairs, stylish sofas and glass finish centre tables, to name a few. Price on request At D-18, Defence Colony, New Delhi



Bling it On▲

Biticino Axolute from Legrand has launched switches embedded with Swarovski crystals. They are available in two finishes, clear crystals on shiny chrome base and light peach crystals on titanium base (left).

Price ₹ 80,000 onwards

At www.legrand.co.in

Grab a Chair▼

International Furniture Brands has introduced exquisite pieces of occasional furniture from the British luxury brand, Jonathan Charles.

The collection consists of reproductions of the finest English and European antiques as well as their own unique mid-century, art deco and transitional designs.

On offer are splendid armchairs, which include the Regency style metamorphic library steps. With its seat upholstered in buttoned and studded green leather, this elegant armchair has scrolling arms and inset leather panels in the treads.

Price on request.

At www.ifbrands.in



Sleeping Partner

Hästens has introduced their Limited edition bed collection titled 2000T. Only 200 beds are available worldwide. The bed made from horse hair, is available in four different firmness types—soft, medium, firm and extra firm. The 2000T has features like cognac leather handles, cognac corner protectors,

cotton piping in royal navy, side stitching in royal navy, royal warrant insignia in embossed leather, square oak legs with brass foot and numbered brass name plate with limited edition sequential numbering along with a personalised certificate.

Price on request

At 2, Krishna Chamber, Main North Road, Koregoan Park, Pune





Regal Appeal ▲

Address Home has introduced a stunning collection of mugs and platters. Featured here is the magnificently crafted Nizam White Fine China small square platter that pays tribute to the heritage of the bygone era with ruby and *kundan* pendant motifs and architectural patterns. Match it with Nizam Marquise coffee mug that features two ornaments set in gold and the inner rim bears the collection's signature pattern.

Price ₹ 690 onwards

At www.addresshome.com



Bejewelled Beauty ▼

One & Only Legendary Furniture has launched a collection of bejewelled furniture pieces. Take for instance a chair clad with silver over the wooden carved arms, or the single pedestal statue stand finished in 22-carat gold leafing. But one of the most stunning pieces is the emerald box (above) that comes with a gold-gilded lid. Each piece in this collection is adorned with either silver, gold or precious and semi precious stones, to make them stand out, while adding dollops of glitz and glamour.

Price on request

At 717 Conclave, Kherki Daula, Next to Haldiram, National Highway -8, Gurgaon, Haryana

HOME | LAUNCHES



Raise the Bar ▲

The Italian Luxury brand Visionnaire has introduced exquisite pieces of furniture designed by acclaimed architect and product designer Steve Leung. The collection titled, Nature's Jewel Box, has an assortment of consoles, low tables, bar unit, sofas, armchairs and dining tables. Featured here is the Palawan bar unit made from polished lacquered wood that comes with a mirrored table top and four engraved mirrored doors adorned with chromed handles with tassels. The back can be upholstered in leather or fabric.

Price on request

At www.visionnaire-home.com

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This air purifier from Philips has a three-stage filtration process



PURE FOR SURE

Tired of coughs that won't go away and respiratory disorders through the year? Pick an air purifier that makes urban living easier.

By HARSHVARDHAN RAWAT

EUREKA FORBES

Aeroguard Clean Air GLO cleans indoor air by releasing a large number of negative ions. These ions chemically react with harmful pollutants and disintegrate them. What's more, it can also remove smoke and its foul smell from a room.

Bright Idea The purifier is embedded with a bulb that lights up when switched on. The bulb is available in two colours, cold and warm white.

Price ₹ 1,390

At www.aeroguard.in

OSIM

The brand has recently unveiled uAlpine that comes with a 360 degree surround air flow



Air purifier from Eureka Forbes releases ions

function, which helps clean the air quicker. The machine's HEPA (High Efficient Particulate Arrestance) filter is refined with sanitised silver that increases the level of purification, resulting in removal of 99.7 per cent of the particulate matter.

Smart Moves The purifier's smart technology senses the level of dust in the air and automatically adjusts the level of fan thereby conserving energy. As a safety measure, it automatically switches off when the back of the device is opened.

Price ₹ 37,000 onwards

At www.osim.com

PHILIPS

The AC4072/00 air purifier comes with a unique VitaShield Technology that purifies the air through a three-stage filtration process,



Panasonic air purifier with Nanoe Technology



Classic range of air purifiers from Blue Air



uAlpine from OSIM senses dust

removing 99.7 per cent airborne particles. Unlike other air purification technologies, this one does not use harsh chemicals, or emit ozone or plasma-formed species into the air, all of which can be detrimental to the health of the users. Other features include a four-step light indicator and a five-step fan speed.

Clean and Clear Its filters are equipped with a smart sensor and light indicators that measure and show the air quality in a room. Also, the Healthy Air Protect and Healthy Air Lock functions indicate filter replacement.

Price ₹ 39,995

At www.philips.co.in

BLUE AIR

The brand's Classic collection of award-winning Swedish design of air purifiers come with features like near silent, energy-efficient operation, remote control, digital display, filter change indicator and HEPASilent technology, which combines the best in mechanical and electrostatic filtration.

Size Matters Depending on the room size you can opt for Classic 270E Slim (small rooms), Classic 450E (small to mid-sized rooms) and Classic 650E (large rooms).

Price ₹ 49,900 to ₹ 94,990

At www.blueairindia.in

PANASONIC

The F-VXF35M air purifier comes with Nanoe Technology, where it emits tiny water molecules with OH-radicals to deactivate bacteria and remove odour. Its House Dust Catcher function purifies using powerful suction near the floor where young children play, while humidification function senses the right humidity for the room.

Spick and Span The 3D air circulation absorbs the dust from all directions, especially the back and the front making the room clean quickly.

Price ₹ 29,995

At www.panasonic.com

HOSAIR

The AirHealth Pro comes with iSix Acti VMS technology, which is a unique six layer filtration technique that eliminates even small contaminants. This is effective in eliminating pollution particles such as allergens, bacteria, viruses and VOCs (volatile organic compounds). Other features include a remote control, timer and child lock.

Make it Big The purifier can cover about 650 sq ft of space, which is good enough for one home. This means you don't need to purchase multiple purifiers.

Price ₹ 39,800

At www.hosair.com

POETRY *of* SPACE

Architect and visionary Sir Peter Cook's works occupy that edgy space between art, craft and design

By RIDHI KALE

Sir Peter Cook

Photograph by VIKRAM SHARMA

What The Beatles are to music, Pablo Picasso is to art, Heston Blumenthal is to food, Sir Peter Cook is for architecture. Making design lyrical, mesmerising and almost hypnotic, the 78-year-old architect was in the Capital to showcase 34 of his architectural drawings created between the 1960s and the early 2000s. One look at his large body of work on display at Gallery Espace and you have an epiphany. You realise that at some point architecture is like poetry, as both require you to wander through space to appreciate it. The fact that every design by Cook challenges a rule makes his work even more special. Take for instance the Skywaft City series (1984-85) where he challenges notions of form with his part-skeletal, part-vegetated and part-in-the-sky structures. Or the Damstead Towers (1993), where the legendary architect turns a pyramid on its head; the tip becomes the base for an eight-floor building. The artworks on display move from greys to vivid colours, highlighting contours and design nuances. His drawings have found space in places like the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

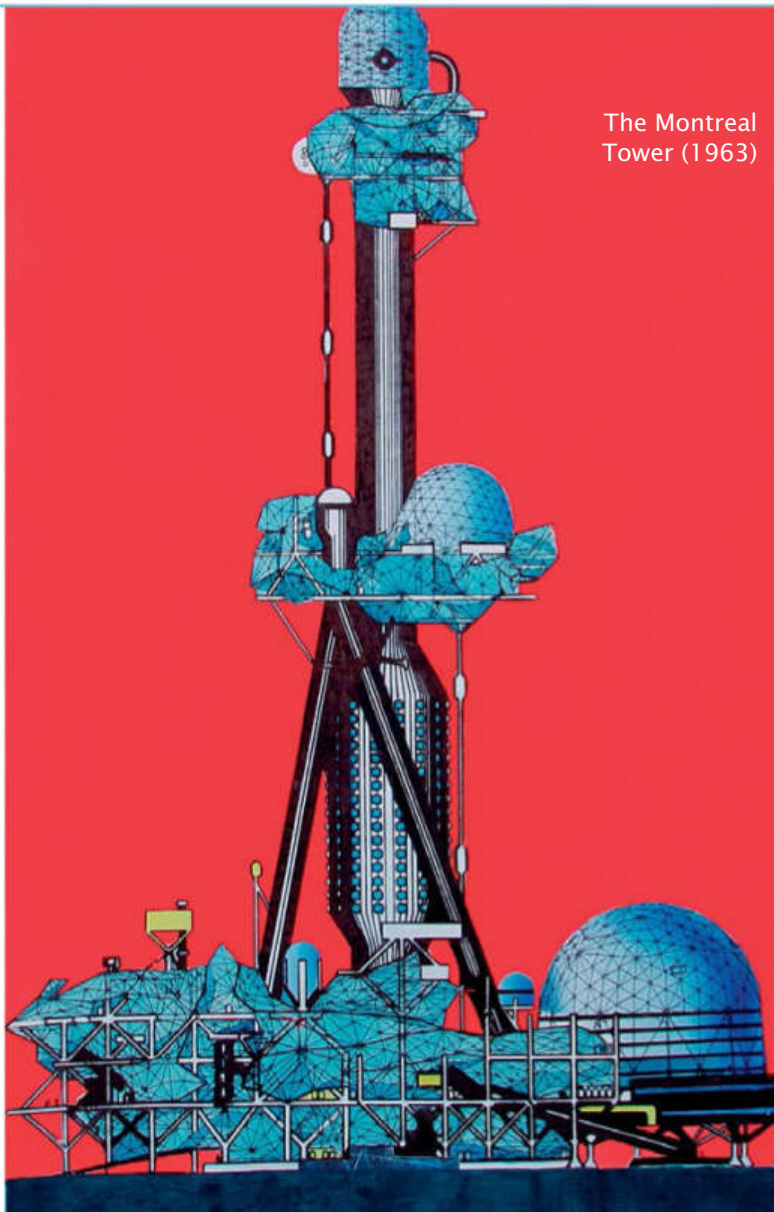
For those not in know, Cook is a founder member of the collective Archigram (short for Architectural Telegram), a publi-

cation that he and six other British architects launched back in 1961, creating a space for alternate ideas. Cook has also been the creative force behind designs of several prestigious buildings across the globe, including the Arts Building in Graz and the Vienna Business and Economics University's law faculty.

"Architecture should give rise to new configurations rather than following the 'boxed-up' style. Technology, vegetation and design should all go hand-in-hand," explains Cook, who was knighted in 2007 by Queen Elizabeth II for his services in architecture. So, what makes him tick? "It begins with an idea, making an observation, having an obsession and asking, what happens if... this results in breaking the mould, like adding a multi-coloured skin over a building," he explains.

Besides designing buildings Cook has also dabbled with furniture. "It started with doing some pieces from my home and office. I wanted to create something different, creative yet comfortable. Today, for the project we are doing in Mumbai, a recreation centre, besides the architectural aspect we will also be designing the furniture," adds the czar of design, who likes to use high density plywood and MDF to create furniture pieces.

The artworks will be on display till September 22, 2015 at Gallery Espace, 16, Community Centre, New Delhi



The Montreal Tower (1963)



Archadia Composite (1982)

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PLAY DRESS

The quickest way to change the look of any space is through textiles. Our bevy of translate this season's latest styles, patterns, techniques and trends into fantastic



These colour-filled rugs from The Rug Republic are perfect for informal spaces

By URSILA ALI

There is something in the festive winds that demands a home makeover; and the fastest way to refurbish your space is through furnishings. However, to stay ahead of the design curve, experts advise homeowners to keep up with textiles trends. From timeless Victorian floral patterns and contemporary minimalist designs to the industrial distressed fabrics that are in, we take a look at the latest techniques, weaves, patterns and colour schemes that you can adopt this season.

GREY RULES THE FLOOR

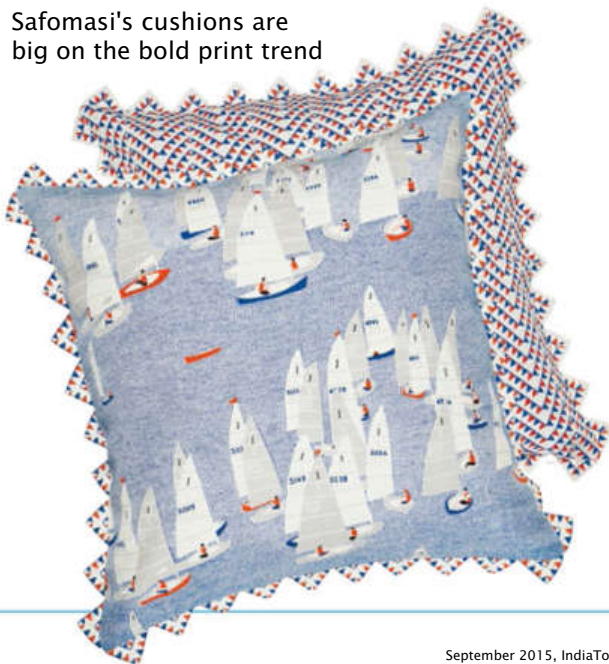
"There are two ways to dress up a room using a rug," explains Aditya Gupta, founder, The Rug Republic, adding, "Sophisticated patterns in neutral tones are perfect for a formal setting, while vibrant and lively patterns work well in a casual, informal set-up." Though both these styles find space in an Indian home, globally, an industrial look with a colour palette that involves greys and charcoals is trending."

Dipali Goenka, managing director of Welspun India Ltd. advises you to match your carpets with the wall to make the room look more appealing. "First-time home buyers usually opt for shag carpets as they come with bright, shiny and pop colours. Also, new mothers prefer to buy carpets that are colourful and have interactive designs," says Goenka, explaining the market trends. For people on a limited budget, a printed nylon carpet is ideal, believes the expert. A clever hack suggested by Goenka to refurbish old carpets is to cut and turn them into place mats.

Price ₹ 5,000 onwards (rugs), ₹ 2,500 onwards (carpets)

At www.therugrepublic.in, www.spaces-home.com

Safomasi's cushions are big on the bold print trend



UP

experts help you
fabrics for your home.



Give your home a chic look with these drapes in subtle shades from The Pure Concept

NEW STYLE DRAPES

"Curtains can be showpieces in themselves or can be subtle, blending into the walls. They add softness as well as an exciting texture to a room," says Chanya Kaur, design director of The Pure Concept. According to Kaur, people are now exploring different stitching styles to add drama to the decor, like the tab top drapes (that do not need curtain rings) and shade panels (that gently filter light). Modern tribal inspired patterns on textured fabrics and curtains in natural fibres like cotton,

linen and jute are popular right now. "Before buying curtains, however, always check the durability, thread count, weave and width of the fabric," Kaur points out.

Price ₹ 600 onwards

At www.thepureconcept.co.in

CUSHIONS ADD DRAMA

For Mandeep Nagi Housego, design director of Shades of India, cushions are the most common decor item found in any home. They are aesthetically appealing, comforta-



The coordinated look is one of the biggest trends this season; this one's from Maspar

ble and long lasting. "You can change the mood and even adopt a particular theme or genre for a space. You may turn to Egypt for inspiration, use a beach theme or adopt a Middle Eastern look," she says. The colours that are popular this season are accents of blues, marsala, gold and metallics. "Coordinate cushions with hues you may already be using and balance strong prints with neutral surfaces. Combine textures with solid colours. Further, always choose shades that contrast with your sofa, but harmonise with other décor elements," she explains.

Price ₹ 2,000 onwards

At www.shadesofindia.com

HANDLOOM LINEN IS IN

Sarah Fotheringham, creative director of Safomasi is all in favour of using cotton. "Handloomed linen and linen blends have a lovely textural quality, which works well in both casual and formal settings. Silks add a glamorous touch, but are less practical," she adds. Further, a table runner is good for making an impact but napkins are the simplest way to dress up a table on a budget.

Price ₹ 1,350 onwards

At www.safomasi.com

HOME

COVER STORY

Roller blinds from D'Decor leave a lasting impact in a minimalist setting



OPT FOR ROLLER BLINDS

Not only are they stylish, but blinds also make a room look bigger. "Duplex blinds (a combination of a sheer fabric and dim out blind) are in fashion. Plain stripes work well in modern homes, while wooden blinds give a warm cosy look," say Sanjana Arora, business head, D'Decor. However, the best budget buys are roller blinds that are essentially window blinds fitted on a roller.

Price ₹ 178 per sq feet onwards

At www.ddecor.com

COORDINATE THE LOOK OF THE BEDROOM

Be it bed spreads, duvet covers, quilts, cushions and pillow covers, bed linen now comes in a variety of shapes, hues and sizes. "Indians collect and curate the look over time, creating a fusion of products that work best with the room," says Rajesh Mahajan, CEO, Maspar. What's trending this season is the coordinated look. "It is an assemblage of one print and pattern spread across different fabrics and products. One can style it in ten different ways while maintaining a common design sensibility," he says.

Price ₹ 25,000 onwards

At www.maspar.com

SITE SEE

Want to give your walls a new look, but don't know where to start? Apps and websites launched by paint companies come to your rescue.

By RIDHI KALE

While paint is one of the easiest ways to give a space a new look ahead of the festive season, most find the process of selecting the right shade, creating an estimate as per their budget and zeroing on the perfect painting technique a daunting task. The good news though is that most paint companies have launched mobile apps and websites that will now make your task easier.

PAINT CALCULATOR

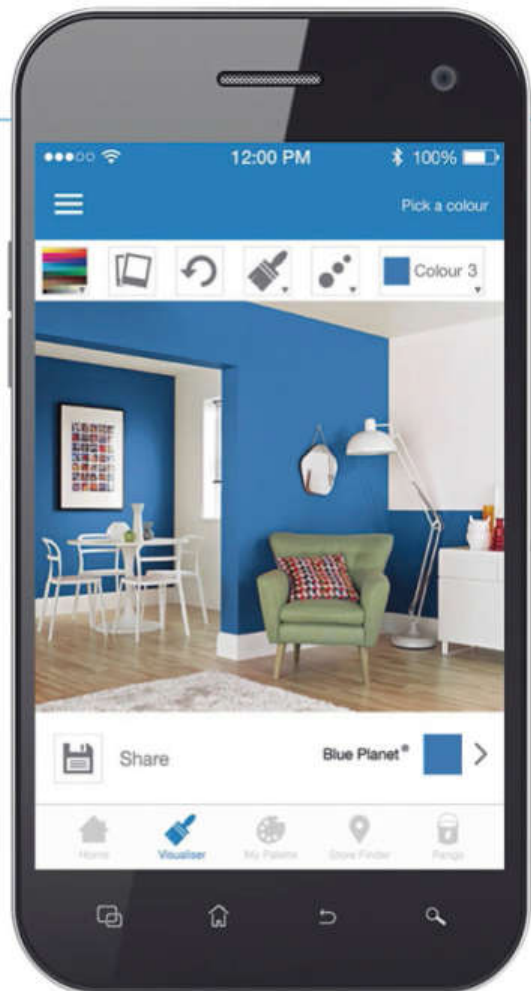
The time, cost and other factors that influence home painting decisions are often fraught with difficulty. Two of the most vital decisions in home painting are colour selection and cost calculations. Now, you can use Nerolac's Paint Calculator app to calculate paint quantities

required for both the interior of a home and exterior surfaces. The basic version of the app allows one to calculate the quantity of paint required on the basis of carpet area, while the advanced version allows for fine tuning of these calculations using actual measurements. It also takes into account the number of coats one would like. However, this does not include labour costs and runs on the MRP of the product selected.

At j.mp/NerolacPaintCalculator (it is available as an app on Android Play Store and as a desktop app as well)

PROJECT PLANNER

Asian Paints believes that to get your painting plans on the road, use the Project Planner website to determine the approximate time it'll take to complete your home painting and the cost involved. All you have to do is answer a few quick questions, provide your room's dimensions and decide when you want to start painting. It allows you to track and manage your painting project, get step-by-step advice and tips, and view your project in a graph format. Unlike other apps and website where you can either opt for interiors of a home or the exteriors, here you can also choose both interior and exterior surfaces of a home as well. Next, you need to





select whether you are going for a fresh coat of paint or if you are planning to re-paint. Then, select the number of rooms, the approximate or the exact area that needs to be painted, the date painting has to be started, paint type (textures, wall fashion, paints for children or plain paint); then, select the product from the company. The best part, the results show the material costs and the estimated project duration, breaking it up per day.

At www.asianpaints.com/make-it-happen/get-started-with-painting/project-planner/project-planner.aspx

VIRTUAL PAINTER

Berger has launched an application called Virtual Painter that allows you to paint a space virtually before putting the actual brush to the wall. This allows the homeowner to test out the look of a particular shade or a combination of colours on a room's interior or a house's exterior. So, you get a rough idea and based on that you can make an informed choice. The process begins with selecting one of the two options, either the interiors of a home or the exterior. Next, you select an image from the gallery. Lastly, you design the room with the available tools and then print, save or share the designed image with your friends. As an added benefit the company also lets users consult them for advice.

At www.bergerpaints.com/virtual-colour-painter

VISUALISER APP

The Dulux Visualizer app allows you to picture the walls before painting it. The app gives you an instant and realistic impression of how your room will look, in the



colours of your choice. Whether it's an eclectic blend of neon yellow and pastel pink or a combination of blue and green, you can now experiment with colours with a click of a button. The process begins with taking a picture of your room; next, browse through the colours, select a shade, tap on the paint colour and then the wall. You can even click on an object, say a cushion cover or sofa upholstery and get corresponding similar shades from Dulux on your screen. After you've applied and viewed your creation, you can save it as well. Later share the creations with your friends, via mail or message. Since the app doubles up as your personal colour assistant, you can experiment with a number of combinations without getting your hands dirty.

At www.dulux.in/en/decorating-tips-and-advice/dulux-visualizer-app (download it from Android or iOS app store)

50 SHADES OF GREY

A canvas for creativity, grey is the new black. Here's why it is a top trend.



LORRAINE BRIGDALE
Global Design Head
Greenlam Industries Ltd

It is an intermediate colour between black and white, but carries the charm and charisma of both. You can create myriad interior schemes and unleash inspired creations enhanced with individual touches. Though considered neutral, today it is being used to liven up spaces.

DON'T OVERDO THE COLOUR

The hue instantly makes any room look classy. Grey supplements the look of antiques, as well as contemporary pieces. However, remember not to overdo the colour, it can easily slip into the dull and dreary category.

USE AS AN ACCENT

Shades of grey can be used to enhance the look of a room clad largely in white. From a walk-in closet to the bedpost or comfy couches, this style is minimalistic yet

chic. In fact, globally, black, grey and white schemes have become a popular tonal choice.

BRING BLING INSIDE

Sober base and sparkling embellishments look lovely, as long as they are used in the right proportion. A pearl-like sparkling laminate juxtaposed with grey woods of different tones is perfect for a modern home.

SMOKY GREY IS A VISUAL TREAT

Smoky (which means using smoked wood and natural textures) is the new buzzword in design. The smoky trend adds drama and looks rich because it is the perfect blend of pastoral charm and natural warmth.

CONCRETE IS IN

Concrete is an interesting shade of grey and is extremely versatile. If you want to construct a bar, a walk-in closet, a kitchen counter top, or play with patterns that allow you to portray urban inspiration, turn to concrete.

From fashion to interiors, grey is here to stay. After all, this chic hue can transform the dulllest space.

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IT'S RAINING IDEAS

The exterior of your house needs to be guarded from dampness this season. Here are a few steps that will help protect it in the coming season.

By HOME TEAM

The downpour brings relief from the scorching sun but it also results in patchy wet walls, leaking roofs, peeling paint; and sometimes a the patch of green forming on the exterior of the building. In addition to the seepage, a smart homeowner will understand that the monsoon affects homes adversely, as accumulation of water due to heavy rains makes the walls damp thereby resulting in development of fungal colonies over time, which can impact the health of the inhabitants. There is a reason

why construction or renovation work is advised to be completed before the monsoon season but if you have missed that bus, taking care of your home post the rains is also highly recommended, as it prepares it for the next season.

Check for any cracks, even hairline cracks, on the exterior walls of your house and look for any signs of peeling exterior paint. It is also a good idea to check for any damp spots on the exterior wall, any seepage in interior walls that are exterior facing, and any patches of green or black. Any of these signs could be a warning signal that your home is not monsoon-safe, and needs protection from the downpour.



Photo courtesy by Dulux



EXPERT TIPS TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT EXTERIOR PAINT FOR YOUR HOME

- Watch out for hairline cracks on the exterior walls of your home, which form due to external temperature changes. Make sure you go for an elastomeric paint that comes with crack-proof technology which expands to cover fine cracks, thereby protecting your home from formation of fungal patches.
- In case your exterior walls are infected with fungal patches, make sure you scrape them off and have them pre-treated before you start fresh paint application. It is always advisable to go for a high quality paint which is loaded with Fungal Guard Technology – A higher biocide package to give your exterior walls the much needed resistance from fungal and algal attacks.
- If your home is exposed to extreme sunlight throughout the year, you should go for a paint that comes with the SunReflect Technology to make your home cooler by as much as 5 degrees! More so, a high quality paint gives your home protection from the harmful effects of sun like cracking, peeling and fading.
- If you live close to the sea, your home is exposed to the adverse impacts of salts in the air and soil which leads to formation of bubbles on the surface of the walls. Look out for a paint with alkali resistance properties.

Expert recommendation by



Often seepage from exterior walls that is not due to a plumbing problem can be corrected with simple precautions and wise investment, including using the correct exterior paint. Exterior paint technology has vastly improved in the past decade and it is wise to give this aspect a thought, rather than opting for the ordinary cement based exterior paint, from the neighborhood hardware store. Good exterior paints have technology that helps them repel water, reflect sunlight, and ensure they don't crack due to temperature fluctuations, or force from water due to rains.

One advanced exterior paint to consider is the new range of Weathershield from Dulux (www.dulux.in/protection),

where the company guarantees protection from a period of five years to ten years, depending on the variant selected. The benefit significantly outweighs the added investment, considering the expense involved in getting seepage repairs, and benefits to the family health. Getting the external walls of your house painted with right paint, at the right time, before the monsoon season, will help make your home monsoon safe for the next five to ten years. An added benefit of using Dulux Weathershield this season is that the company has launched 'Dulux Protect Plan'. What it entails is free house insurance of ₹ 2 lakh, in partnership with Bajaj Allianz. These simple steps can keep your home rain ready.



Get home insurance worth Rs. 10 lakhs* from Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, every time you choose Dulux Weathershield for your home.

dulux.in/protection



WHAT'S COOKING?

Five trends that are changing the humble kitchen into a chef's haven



Caesarstone Surfaces from Hafele are up to 93 percent quartz



JURGEN WOLF
Managing Director
Hafele India

The Indian market is becoming receptive to innovative home interior trends. This can be attributed to the increased number of international players operating in the country (offering international trends in home fittings and solutions) as well as to the fact that many homeowners are now travelling abroad (on work and leisure trips) and gaining exposure to global trends. As a result of this, many stereotypes in home and kitchen fittings or materials are slowly giving

way to contemporary trends, which are sustainable and high on functionality.

THE INTERACTIVE KITCHEN

Today, the kitchen is not merely seen as a hub for cooking and cleaning activities. It has gradually transformed into the focal point for families, where besides cooking, small meals are served, homework is done or friends are entertained. The Indian kitchen is slowly becoming the centre of home life and entertainment. Therefore, concepts



Hafele's VSA pull-out storage unit allows the storage baskets to automatically slide out

like open and island kitchens with a small coffee table or dining set-up are gaining tremendous popularity.

CONTEMPORARY COUNTERTOPS

From the initial and age-old preferences of marble and granite, homeowners are now looking at innovative materials like quartz surfaces for kitchen countertops. Unlike marble or granite, quartz is an engineered stone

that can be rendered in many colours and textures while giving the same amount of tenacity and endurance of conventional marble or granite.

BUILT-IN APPLIANCES ARE IN VOGUE

Today, new age modern appliances are gaining pre-dominance. These appliances come with convenience in operations with high-levels of automation and precision. Another wave of novelty that has hit the market in the last five years is the built-in appliances concept; and like anything new, it's catching the keen eye of the customer. However, the decision to buy built-in appliances is on a slow yet steady upscale. The main reason for this is that the integration of built-in appliances in an existing kitchen requires some amount of back-work (especially if the kitchen is not modular). On the other hand, in case of designing new kitchens, this process is easier. The installation of built-in appliances is largely dependent on the modularity of a kitchen; it follows the same designing principles of modular kitchens, where the cabinet heights and depths are standard while the width can vary as per customer requirements. Most of the built-in appliances available in the market are available in standard sizes as per the cabinet modules. Therefore, the growth of this segment is directly connected with the growth of the modular kitchen market.

FUNCTIONALITY IS KEY

While ergonomics in a kitchen is attributed to good kitchen designing, functionality is a direct outcome of kitchen fittings. This is a growing trend in its own sphere. Self-closing drawers, electrical opening systems for cabinets (where shutters or drawers open at the slightest nudge), lift-up systems for overhead cabinets, tall units for grocery and bulk storage, corner solutions for maximum space utilisation are some trends that are gaining prominence.

THE BRIGHTER THE BETTER

Lighting in kitchens serves a dual role; it can be decorative (accent lighting) to enhance expensive crockery and glasses showcased in your glass cabinets; and it can be effective (task lighting) to facilitate kitchen chores like cleaning, chopping and cooking. Decorative LED lighting in cabinets, display lights, LED strips are some ideal solutions to enhance the overall colours and design in your kitchen. Under-cabinet lighting, recessed lighting within drawers and overhead cabinets are ideal for providing effective illuminance to execute every kitchen chore to optimum detail.

ECO WARRIORS

These five product designers have redefined sustainable design.
We take a look at their ecological creations.

By RIDHI KALE



**RADHIKA KHAITAN MITTAL (29) AND
MADHAVI KHAITAN PITTIE (28)**

WorkshopQ, Jaipur

Sisters, Radhika Khaitan Mittal and Madhavi Khaitan Pittie, studied visual communications at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, LA, USA before moving back to India. Once home they realised that people perceived eco-friendly as only earthy and rustic. So, the duo started WorkshopQ in 2010 to give a new meaning to green design.

From junk to funk It started when they visited a friend's factory and spotted big crumpled balls of coloured aluminium scrap and decided to transform it. The brand's USP? The products don't look like scrap, this is only revealed when someone reads the story line. The sisters source different kinds of waste such as salvaged wood, steel, cardboard, plastic, vinyl records, wine corks, cables and wires from factory junk yards, office and household waste areas to create lamps, clocks, trunks, photoframes, boxes and trays.

Price ₹ 200 to ₹ 3,000

At www.workshopq.com



Radhika Khaitan Mittal (extreme left) and Madhavi Khaitan Pittie with their creations

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

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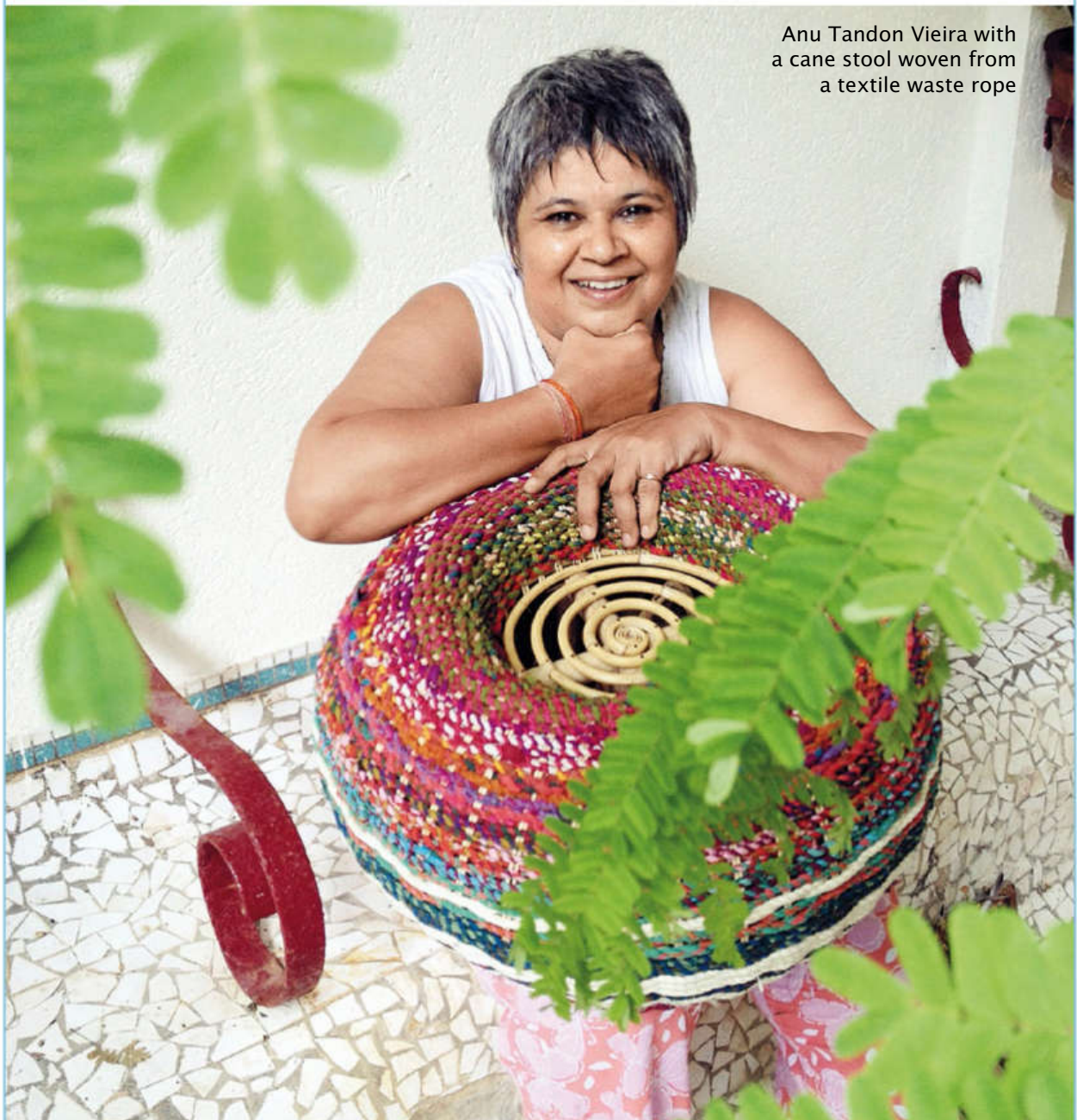
ANU TANDON VIEIRA, 52*The Retirement Plan, Mumbai*

A fine arts graduate from College of Art in New Delhi, Anu Tandon Vieira completed her post-graduation (specialising in textile design) from National Institute of Design, (NID) Ahmedabad. She has also worked on restoring the Udaipur Palace. Vieira is passionate about designing sustainable, comfortable and exquisitely handcrafted furniture by re-purposing material waste from urban jungles.

Waste Management Featured here is a cane stool woven with textile waste rope. She also has a range of occasional furniture pieces that use discarded tyres of all shapes and sizes, woven over with ropes in shimmering plastic waste. Discarded tyres are ten times less expensive, than any other material used for furniture, and they are extremely tough and hardy. They take millions of years to disintegrate and can be used in any space.

Price ₹ 8,500 to ₹ 30,000

By appointment only anu.tandonvieira@gmail.com



Anu Tandon Vieira with
a cane stool woven from
a textile waste rope



Jenny Pinto uses paper to make her lights

JENNY PINTO, 55

Jenny Pinto, Bangalore

After a successful career as an ad film producer in Mumbai, Jenny Pinto moved to Bangalore in 1996. By 2000 she was already creating an amazing range of lights, home accessories and stationery handmade from agricultural and craft waste fibres such as banana, sisal, mulberry, pineapple and various river grasses.

Paper Trail Pinto's products take inspiration from nature; the forest and the ocean have forms that are awe inspiring and sculptural. In fact, her love for nature led her to build a studio that harvests rain water and recycles waste and water from the paper making process. Pinto creates wall, table, floor and ceiling lamps in varied shapes and sizes using different techniques to texture, embellish colour paper and even weaves paper on a handloom and uses the Japanese tie-dye technique of Shibori. While natural, eco-friendly material goes into the lamps, for the stand and base, Jenny tries to incorporate sustainable materials like bamboo and stone.

Price ₹ 1,200 to ₹ 60,000

At www.jennypinto.com



Prakash Mehrotra at his store Basil in Kolkata

Photograph by SUBIR HALDER

PRAKASH MEHROTRA, 40

Basil, Kolkata

While his family was into building automobiles, Prakash Mehrotra found that he loved helping friends do up their homes. In 2006, he decided to turn his passion into a vocation and set up Basil after converting his 1,800 sq ft apartment into a showroom for his designs.

Get the Drift Mehrotra creates furniture and accessories from an eco-friendly material, drift wood (it is wood that has been washed onto a shore or beach of a sea, lake, or river by the action of winds, tides or waves). On display are coffee tables, lights, bar cabinets, dustbins, tissue holders, book ends, t-light holders and mirrors, to name a few. The material's USP, besides its green quotient, is the trendy look it lends to interiors.

Price ₹ 500 to ₹ 1,50,000

At 2K, Alipore Avenue, Ground Floor, Kolkata

SHREYA JAIN, 29*La Kairos, Delhi*

A graduate in textile design from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, Shreya Jain went on to pursue her Masters in Design Management at London College of Fashion. However, her fascination for textiles has been a life-long affair influenced by her mother; so, in 2011 she started La Kairos, a luxe bedding brand.

Material Girl Every collection is handcrafted, which is a revival process of the art of Indian hand-embroidery and uses the finest natural mate-

rials including cottons, silks, silk velvets and linens. What makes her products sustainable is the fact that not only does she use organic and biodegradable materials, her design process ensures there is no wastage of fabric. Featured here are appliqué and embroidered shams, embroidered and lace cushions and a hand pleated silk bedspread, part of Etoile Viollete, Enchanted and Mandarin Sun-Garden collections.

Price ₹ 2,500 to ₹ 20,000 (home accessories), ₹ 45,000 to ₹ 1,75,000 (bedding ensemble)

At www.lakairos.com

Shreya Jain surrounded by her latest collections

Finger Clicking Good

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Text by RIDHI KALE

Venetti sofa in leatherette (3+1) ₹ 64,311; mies coffee table ₹ 7,999; horizon dhurrie in cotton ₹ 1,999; virginia hand tufted carpet ₹ 5,999; lattice (grey) carpet ₹ 2,499; kepler tripod lamp ₹ 3,999; boris cushion cover ₹ 699; cole cushion ₹ 399; doppa side table ₹ 4499. All available at www.urbanladder.com





DESIGNING WITH BLACK AND WHITE

Ebony and ivory live together in perfect harmony, side by side... Sang Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder. This living room setting by UrbanLadder.com puts their theory to test, with dramatic results. Layering carpets and rugs (a popular trend at the moment); placing cushions and a triptych of art works in black and white, gives the space a chic, contemporary yet minimal look.

Photograph by NILOTPAL BARUAH

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HOME
STYLE

MAKE IT A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Deep reds, seductive maroons and hints of bright blue—colours that shout traditional, juxtaposed with products that look modern, is the essence of this low dining room setting by Jaypore.com. Further, wooden bowls and ceramic dinnerware contrast well with natural fibre furnishings and the brass pot.

Photograph by M ZHAZO

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Multi-coloured trigarta trunk box ₹ 19,999; barranquilla solid wood bed side table in provincial teak finish from Woodsworth ₹ 6,499; pitoria queen-size bed in antique grey from CasaCraft ₹ 53,999; lawrence chair in aqua green from Amberville ₹ 12,023; whistling porcelain enamelled kettle in yellow from Fujihoro ₹ 2,995; bliss mug set from Symphony ₹ 885 (set of four); black antique fan from Tu Casa ₹ 4,667; copper hookah-shaped phone from Tu Casa ₹ 2,250; madhubani hand painted wooden tray ₹ 2,333. All available at www.pepperfry.com

HOME | STYLE

GO FOR BOLD

What is it about the boudoir that makes one veer towards pastels and paisleys? Pepperfry.com decided to kick that notion out of the window, using a striking turquoise wall as the backdrop. However, to balance it, subtler shades have been used for the furnishings and furniture. A tribal motif trunk at the bottom of the bed adds another dimension to the room.



Photograph by M ZHAZO



THE GEOMETRY OF A READING CORNER

A bookshelf of treasures (in this case decor objects and books) popping out of every possible shelf is a book worm's and an aesthete's dream. TheHouseofThings.com plays with geometric forms (which are in vogue globally) to create this cosy nook to read your books. Clearly, it's a profusion that invites you to peer, peruse and, perchance, to purchase.

Geometric book shelf price on request; black white coffee table from The Edit ₹ 20,000; maharaja chair from The Edit ₹ 35,000; chevron rug from Noelle Kadar ₹ 30,000; butterfly ginkgo nut dish from Michael Aram ₹ 19,400; bird of paradise from Tamaa ₹ 12,200; gilded angel from The Edit ₹ 38,000 (per piece); gilded panel from The Edit ₹ 10,000; nandi hand painted curio from Mayur Arts ₹ 19,800; bone inlay urn in white from Mayur Arts ₹ 7,500; Raja Ravi Verma lithograph from The Edit ₹ 35,000. All available at www.thehouseofthings.com

SILVER SPLENDOUR

Many consider it bling without the sting. The golden age of stylish, silver furniture is here to stay.

By RIDHI KALE

HOUSE OF HEIRLOOM

"As designs in silver are being made more contemporary, clients are now able to purchase single statement pieces in silver to add a luxe element to their home," says Rahul Singh, who launched House of Heirloom that deals in silver furniture, a little over a year ago.

WHAT'S ON OFFER Singh retails silver furniture that marries traditional design with modern aesthetics. On display are beds, dinning tables, sofas, chairs and mirrors. He also creates customised pieces for interior projects. A silver chair starts at ₹ 1 lakh, a sofa, ₹ 4 lakh, while a bed starts at ₹ 7 lakh.

TOP TRENDS Inlay of silver on table tops in granite, marble stools with silver tops, contemporary chairs in silver, the list of silver being used interestingly in furniture is expanding. Rather than the traditional designs using horses and peacocks, which were voluminous and bulky, now one is seeing silver furniture with a modern edge being designed.

CONTEMPORARY SPIN Straight line silver chairs with pop colours or a contemporary sofa with silver edges can be integrated seamlessly into a modern space. That said, however, it is critical to look at the workmanship to ensure a piece bought in silver will be an heirloom, one you can pass down to the next generation.

ADDRESS 47 Capital Trust House, New Friends Colony Community Centre, Delhi

BEDROOM



Black Taj collection from House of Heirloom



RAVISSANT

"Smooth to touch, solid in appearance, comfortable to sit on, regal in appeal and embodiment of luxury—silver furniture makes a bold style statement," says Bhavana Jeyendranand, GM, Ravissant, a company that has been dealing in silver furniture since 1991.

QUICK LIST They make a range of handcrafted furniture using teak and oak wood, clad with silver sheets of 92.5 per cent purity. Their mirrors and coffee tables start at ₹ 1 lakh, chairs ₹ 2.5 lakh, consoles ₹ 3.5 lakh, sofa sets ₹ 5 lakh and beds ₹ 20 lakh.

WHAT'S IN VOGUE Silver temples, chaukis and consoles are really popular. People are also going for ethnic and royal designs.

BEJEWELLED BEAUTY Silver furniture with elements of semi precious stones such as rose quartz, lapis and crystal never goes out of fashion. Pair, various fabrics like embroidered brocades, silks or velvets with such furniture, they look fantastic.

ADDRESS www.ravissant.in

FUSION FARE



Frazer and Haws' Mysore Table fuses wood with silver

FRAZER AND HAWS

"We have customised several silver pieces earlier but it's only this year that our new showroom in Delhi opened with an interesting array of furniture with silver accents, all in limited editions," says Archana Kumari Singh, President, Frazer And Haws.

ON DISPLAY Their new furniture line combines silver with wood and leather. The traditional craft of cladding carved wood in pure sheets of silver has acquired an entirely new look to keep it different from what is already available in the market. Their USP is the fact that they can customise everything as per the client's requirement. As for the price, pieces with silver-plating start at ₹ 56,000 and with sterling silver, at ₹ 68,000.

DESIGNS THAT LAST A LIFETIME Instead of going by the latest fad, which fades very quickly, Singh advises customers to pick up classics that look lovely and are versatile.

STYLE FILE Silver goes well with traditional and modern styles. In today's contemporary settings, a single, dominant piece of furniture, such as the centre table, a rocking chair, or the bar unit, with elements of silver can be visually dramatic.

ADDRESS A-265, Defence Colony, Delhi

DINING ROOM

A silver dining table from Adarsh Gill Home is offset by a carved cabinet



ADARSH GILL HOME

"Silver is long lasting and can be handed down several generations," says fashion designer turned silver connoisseur Adarsh Gill, who started Adarsh Gill Home in 2006.

SILVER LINING Gill loves to create pieces with silver sheeting on carved rosewood that revives an old dying technique practiced in the royal courts of India. Her furniture also finds inspiration in art deco, baroque, Victorian, neo-modern, Rajputana and Mughal periods. The silver chairs, sofas, four-poster beds, dining tables, chaise lounges, consoles and handcrafted mirrors start at ₹ 2 lakh.

TEAM IT WITH The precious metal can be paired with a number of other materials like glass, crystal and wood to enhance the look.

WHAT'S HOT While some people prefer contemporary silver furniture, others like ornate and carved pieces. However, at the moment, design aficionados are going gaga over pieces with clean, straight lines, believes Gill.

ADDRESS 10 Jor bagh Market, Delhi

NUPURH J

"We enjoy giving a contemporary spin to silver and our customers love it," says Nidhi Jain, who along with her sister Nupurh started the brand in 2007.

MADE TO ORDER The sisters create one-of-a-kind bespoke pieces for their client's homes. It can range from a contemporary stool for the *mandir* to a wooden sofa with silver accents on it. The price starts at ₹ 1.5 lakh.

IN STYLE Nupurh believes that people are tired of seeing staid silver furniture. Contemporary design is in vogue.

PERFECT PAIRING According to the Jains silver can be teamed with any material. They have paired it with stone, glass, crystal, wood and marble.

ADDRESS www.nupurhj.com

WRAP ART & DESIGN

"We launched our collection of gold and silver thrones in London at 100% Design in 2006 and since then they have become symbolic of contemporary Indian luxury in furniture," says product designer Gunjan Gupta of Wrap Art & Design.

DESIGNER SHOWCASE Besides silver chairs and tables, they have also have silver-wrapped Swarovski chairs. The prices start upwards of ₹ 10 lakh

FINDING INSPIRATION Thrones are the oldest form of elevated furniture in India and pure pre-

cious metals and stones were used to embellish them. This is the oldest reference to silver furniture, which has now got a modern twist.

MIX AND MATCH Silver works beautifully when contrasted with colour and textures; Gupta believes rough finishes, such as stone work well with it. Also, gold leaf beautifully complements silver.

ADDRESS Studio WRAP, Khasra No. 522/4, Village Jaunapur, Gadaipur Mandi Road, Mehrauli, Delhi



Dumroo side tables from Wrap Art & Design

ALCHEMY DE LUXE

"Though quirky is ruling these days, silver furniture still has its own charm," says Poonam Gupta, chief designer and CEO of Alchemy De Luxe. Gupta has over 28 years of experience in the silver industry and opened this retail arm in 2012.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE They provide custom-made furniture such as centre tables, coffee tables and long back chairs, priced at ₹ 1 lakh onwards.

PAIR IT WITH Dark wood furniture, leather accessories look good in combination with

silver, says Gupta. You can use rich fabrics like silk, jacquards, satin, velvet and add a splash of vibrant colour while choosing your furnishings, to complement the silver furniture.

CURRENT TRENDS These days silver furniture does not mean an elaborate piece with vast detailing. Slick, stylish and minimal furniture that combines silver and natural wood is in demand.

ADDRESS At Hamilton & Co Ltd. Empire House, A K Nayak Marg, Fort, Mumbai

LIVING ROOM



A sofa set from Exclusively Yours

EXCLUSIVELY YOURS

"Investing in silver furniture is very different from buying a leather couch. Silver furniture represents luxury, opulence and should be the wow factor in your living room," says Akanksha Aggarwal, who along with her mother Nenna, opened Exclusively Yours in April, this year.

RETAIL SPACE The products are designed by the mother-daughter from scratch. Since every design is exclusive, your piece is unique. Their USP is the detailing that is visible in each product. They are also open to customising and commissioning special pieces. The furniture starts at ₹ 50,000 and goes up to ₹ 10 lakh.

BREAKING THE MOULD Though silver furniture has been around forever, most of the silver furniture available in India follows the style and taste of the Mughal period. Akanksha and Nenna wanted to break away from that so they styled their furniture pieces, giving it a European look and feel.

MODERN MAKEOVER People look at silver furniture more as accents or accessories to the main furniture in the house. If a silver sofa set is not your cup of tea, Akanksha advises purchasing that one bold piece like a stool or a stunning chair to up the luxe quotient of your living space.

ADDRESS www.exclusivelyyours.in

WORLD WATCH

A quick round-up of what's trending
in the international design world



Eat Street

Inspired by an eclectic mix of elements seen in the streets and alleys of Asia, the interiors of the recently completed Amsterdam-based restaurant 'happyhappyjoyjoy' have been creating quite a stir online. Designed by Dutch studio Concrete, they have used bold colours, textures and prints throughout the five dining spaces of the eatery. All the walls are wrapped with vivid posters and artworks collected from various countries. Don't miss the collection of overlapping paper umbrellas hanging upside-down from the ceiling.
At happyhappyjoyjoy.asia/nl

Bridging the Gap

The September edition of Masion et Object in Paris has doubled up as a showcase of great design and decor. This time Italy-based Alessandro Zambelli has launched, Rivoalto, a small console shelf, which draws inspiration from the iconic landmark, the Rialto Bridge in Venice. The product represents a collaboration between the designer with the Italian company Portégo. The primary purpose of this piece is to neatly display small objects of sentimental or utilitarian value.

At www.alessandrozambelli.it



Marble Marvel

Not only has the Taj Mahal inspired many-a-poet, this time luxury Portugal-based brand Brabbu as well. Their latest collection titled Agra, featuring a marble console, dining table and display stand, looks stunning in its stark simplicity.

At www.brabbu.com



Out of Morocco

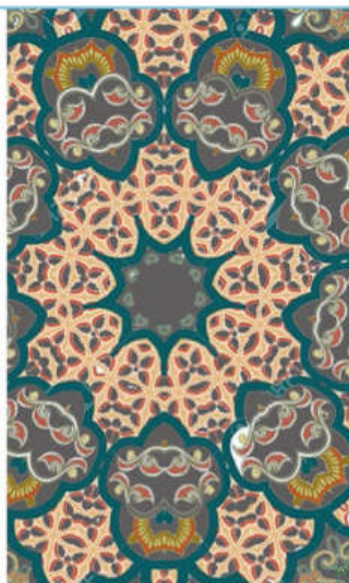
Combining elements from Moroccan, Mughal and modern design, interior designer Shantanu Garg creates a unique look for this bungalow in Jaipur

By **RIDHI KALE**

Tasteless, ornate, over-the-top interiors are passé. There finally seems to be a solution to same-look interiors and the garish home accessories, unimaginatively stacked

together. Case in point: this home in Jaipur by interior designer Shantanu Garg that defies all rules and dares to experiment with new themes. The 'fusion' trend has been used and abused by architects and interior designers across the sub-continent. So, you can imagine the weight on Garg's shoulders, when

In the master bedroom the colourful headboard is the pièce de résistance



The walls have been decorated using colourful Moroccan inspired motifs like these



Dr Nalin Joshi, renowned pulmonologist from Jaipur, wanted a 'fusion' theme for his home in the capital of Rajasthan. "We suggested transitional décor, a perfect balance of modern and traditional. Morocco became the basis of designing the home, but is not the only concept in the project," explains 28-year-old Garg, who has designed over 80 diverse projects across the country. A mushrooming trend in India, Moroccan décor takes its roots from Moorish architecture and ranges from royal arches to modern buildings. "Elements of this form, like large motifs, customised fabrics, doorways and archways have helped achieve a transition between Moroccan, Mughal and modern design," says Garg. Spread across 12,000 square feet, the bungalow has four floors and is a visual delight.

UNDERSTANDING THE LAYOUT

"This house is structured in the form of volumes like cubes and cuboids. The foyer is incorporated in one of the links of these volumes, which leads to formal living on the left and family living and dining on the right," says Garg. As you cross the foyer there is Dr Joshi's consultation room on the left and towards the end of the foyer, a puja room. On the other side of the living and dining room is the master bedroom, followed by a dress toilet, a lift shaft and a kitchen. "Climbing up the stairwell, we land into the lounge area that leads to two spaces—one block for the master suite, which is over the ground floor master bedroom and kitchen, while the other block is for the daughters, with two separate bedrooms and their personal dresser and toilets," adds

Garg. On the second floor, there is a home theatre, a guest bedroom and a gym, which opens into the terrace. The basement consists of extra storage and cellars, grain grinding machines and deep freezers.

MOROCCAN MOTIFS AND COLOURS

The beauty of this home lies in the fact that each room has a distinctly different look. "The foyer is based on the concept of 'compress and release'. It is initially a narrow space, which releases into the larger living-cum-dining space," adds Garg. The formal living room has been decorated with old collectibles and essays the Dr Joshi's wife, Kalpana's interest in jewellery and fabrics. "Using them for accessorising, the personal touch creates a warm feeling," says the designer. The living room has a slit along

the front glazing, cutting through the first floor, overlooking the beautifully landscaped lawns. A large but simple conical chandelier throws light with beautiful light-and-shadow effect. "The kitchen is spacious, planned with an island counter in the centre, it has an attached store and a utility space with another access from outside for the help," he adds. A small buffer space between the master bedroom and the living room affords privacy. The master bedroom showcases Moroccan motifs, on the wall and in the form of the furniture (like the TV unit and the bed's headboard). "Bright colours are used only on the motifs on wall and on the headboard. Rest, everything is kept neutral in earthy tones," he says. The bedroom is linear in plan with a French balcony open on three sides. "The back of the bed is designed with full height cushioning in

The home theatre is a combination of comfortable seats and bright walls





This living space has Moroccan wall motifs, a modern chandelier and Mughal artworks



Mughal painted fabric and modern panels with wall lights over the side tables," explains the proud designer.

The lounge on the first floor has a comfortable seating arrangement with an L-shaped sofa, ottoman and armchairs. A door in Moroccan style leads to the girls' room. The elder daughter's bedroom is designed keeping the informal cabana structure as the basis and the TV unit and study has a niche painted in a typical Moroccan pattern while the younger daughter's bedroom has a bed inspired by a French chariot. The home theatre on the second floor consists of the wall panels cushioned with hand painted canvas fabric. The layout of the theatre is across two levels, one with recliners and the other with two beds perfect for an informal party space.

MATERIALS COMPLEMENT DESIGN

Garg has used Italian marble for the flooring in common spaces to increase the volume of the area, while wooden flooring has been used in the bedrooms to lend a feeling of warmth. The terrace sports Moroccan tiles, this ties the outside to the inside. "For the exterior surfaces, we have used a thin Italian tile from a company called Laminam, while the walls are adorned with a paint finish called Marmarino, which has the crust of stone mixed in it to give the grainy texture," says Garg. The furniture has been designed with Rubio coating, antique patina and metallic finishes. As for the soft furnishings, a mix of leather, and fabrics with custom prints have been used.

It took Garg nine months to complete this property, as it required a lot of unique elements, which was a big challenge. "Take for instance the three sided column-and-wall free balcony with the master bedroom or the cantilevered home theatre, it was tough but the end result was worth the turmoil, sweat and stress," he adds.

Clearly, this home shows how three design genres (Moroccan, Mughal and modern) can coexist in style.

FROM SCARF TO STOOL



The French fashion house has brought its Les Nécessaires D'hermès collection to the country. One of the most alluring pieces from the collection inspired by the iconic Hermès silk scarf is the Carré d'assise low stool. Designed in collaboration with French designer Philippe Nigro, the low stool is available with bases of Canaletto walnut and brushed stainless steel feet, and can be covered in leather or fabric with story-based motifs or graphic patterns. Mirroring the proportions of the scarf, the stool is available in different heights, so, it can be used for various purposes like seating, a side table, an ottoman or even a coffee table. A marriage of skill and aesthetics, it takes furniture design to a whole new level.

Price ₹ 3,96,000 onwards

At A-15, Bharat Insurance Building, Horniman Circle, Fort, Mumbai

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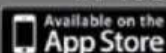
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Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

COVER STORY**The Good Life****s-4**

Take a dip in the pools, unwind at the spa or feast on royal recipes at Gujarat's luxury hotels.

FEATURE**The Rickshaw Gallery****s-16**

The humble rickshaw is ready to enter the art space.

Cover photo by Danesh Jassawala

OUR PICK of the month**Crafts Carnival****September 20 and 21**

If you missed the Rannutsav, then this is your chance to see Kutch in its most colourful beauty. The annual two-day Ravechi Mela in Bhuj begins on September 20 and is counted among the most important festivals of the Rabari community from the region. While devotees throng to the temples, the biggest attraction for tourists are the stalls set up by locals selling attractive hand embroidered clothes and accessories. The locals are known for their thread and mirror work and the fair is a colourful treat. **Getting there** Bhuj is connected to all major cities by road, rail and air.

Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplygujarati@intoday.com

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THE



GOOD LIFE

GUJARAT'S HOTELS OFFER GUESTS A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES. TAKE A DIP IN THE POOLS, UNWIND AT THE SPA, FEAST ON ROYAL RECIPES OR CHECK IN FOR A BUSINESS MEETING.

By ADITI PAI

Modern Living

■ THE HYATT AHMEDABAD

What takes us back to this place is the vibrant energy, plush decor and the warm and efficient service. Located bang opposite the Alfa One Mall, Vastrapur, the three-year-old Hyatt Ahmedabad is compact but packs in ample green spaces, a small but welcoming pool, 178 rooms and a sprawling health club and spa area. The spa and salon are indeed the highlight with products from Ananda in the Himalayas. With its easy access and plush comforts, the hotel often plays host to visiting dignitaries such as the prime minister and chief ministers.

Home of Art There's always something special here and the hotel often hosts art-related activities. On Independence Day this year, they launched a special art show in which noted artist Paresh Maity has painted artworks based on Rabindranath Tagore's poems.

Food Fiesta There's a food promotion every month and a food festival every quarter for which the hotel's chefs travel to varied Hyatt properties across the world to learn local signature delicacies. In July, the hotel hosted the Sicily food festival with a special menu, a new décor and even traditional Italian clothes for the staff.

Cost for a night Rs 6,000 **At** Plot 216, Town Plan Scheme 1, near Vastrapur Lake **Tel** 07961601234 ahmedabad.hyatt-hotels.hyatt.com

Designer Noopur Anita Balia, in a Young Trukk creation, by the Poolside at Hyatt, Ahmedabad

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

Ravi Dalal in the corridors of Mani Mansion

Time Travel

■ MANI MANSION

A luxury home stay-hotel seeped in history—that's how you'd best describe Mani Mansion, a haveli-turned-hotel with 21 lavish rooms, a multi-cuisine restaurant, eco-friendly amenities and the warm and affable hotel owners who live in the same property. The hotel has changed names over the years—from Corporate Suites, it's now called Mani Mansion, after Manibhai Dalal, who built it as his family home over 90 years ago. His grandson, Tushar Dalal, a businessman who ran an effluent treatment plant company, decided to throw it open to guests as a home away from home, a tag that the hotel lives up to.

The family mingles with room and restaurant guests, Dalal often steps into the kitchen to cook a special dish for regular guests and the cook, who has been with the family for 30 years, gladly whips up Gujarati delicacies on request.

Old Meets New The 21 rooms have a vintage touch with high beds, antique tables and coffee counters, quaint benches and very modern bathrooms.

Eco Friendly It is an eco friendly hotel with an emphasis on sustainability. Dalal has fitted it with solar panels that meet "at least one-third of our energy requirement", a solar water heater, rain harvesting, a sewage treatment plant that filters and recycles water to the gardens and is setting up a biogas production plant to treat solid waste.

Touch of history Dalal recounts times when noted Mann Bhatt folk singers stayed here and narrated the epics through music. Mahatma Gandhi is also believed to have stayed here during Manibhai's times.

Cost for a night Rs 5,000 **At** Paldi Cross Roads, Behind Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall, Ahmedabad **Tel** 07926577404 corporatesuites.in

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA



The Emperor restaurant
at Deltin Daman

Sea Side Story

■ Deltin

Deltin Group, best known for its casinos in Goa, gives the beach town of Daman a luxury destination with the Deltin Daman. The beachside hotel, the largest resort in Daman, sprawls over 10 acres with 10,000 square feet of beautifully landscaped gardens. With 176 rooms and a host of amenities like a luxurious swimming pool, bars, restaurants, spas and meeting rooms, the resort is ideal for vacations and as well as parties and weddings or business conferences.

Luxury Retreat If your idea of a holiday is simply lazing around, then the meandering pool will be your perfect getaway companion. Take a dip, float around lazily, or take a nap by the poolside. They even have a pool side bar where you can grab a chilled drink on a warm afternoon. The hotel

has four restaurants to cater to different taste buds. The Emperor restaurant, with its opulent décor, offers pan-Asian cuisine while Vegas has a multi-cuisine menu. If you like your malts, try The Whisky Lounge which has an extensive collection of whiskeys and single malts.

Celebration Time The Grandice ballroom is one of the largest pillar-less ballrooms in Gujarat and accommodates 350 people in cluster style seating. The hotel can host up to 2,000 people at a time, making the Deltin a good choice for weddings, corporate offsite meetings and big events.

Cost for a night Rs 5,990 onwards

At Varkund, Nani Daman, Daman

Tel 02606699999

deltingroup.com



Kushal Daulatani in the lobby of Metropole Hotel's Earth-themed floor

Smart Spaces

■ THE METROPOLE HOTEL

Aqua, earth or retro—you can choose a theme room to suit your mood for the day when you check into the Metropole Hotel. This was the place that brought in the concept of theme boutique hotels when it opened in 2007, with every floor done up on a different theme, right from the lobby to the guest rooms. So, if you pick an aqua room, you're greeted with the cool colours of blue and lime green on the furnishings. The retro floor is splashed with large posters of Marilyn Monroe while the earth rooms have a colour palate of browns and beiges. **Check in Comfort** The Metropole has 67 rooms done up with different themes and three suites, which are fitted with a Jacuzzi in the bathroom. For long staying or repeat guests, the hotel maintains a record of the rooms they've stayed in and offers to shift them to a different themed room for variety. "That way each guests gets a different feel every time they visit. Otherwise hotel stays can get boring," says Kushal Daulatani, director, Metropole.

Meet and Greet With its convenient location, the Metropole hosts business meetings and weddings. There are eight banquet halls of varying sizes and a multi-cuisine coffee shop.

Open to All One of the rooms is done up for the physically challenged guests with spaces that are wheelchair accessible, wider doors and fitted with special lights and cordless phones for easy access.

Cost for a night Rs 2,600

At R.T.O. Circle, Subhash Bridge Corner, Ahmedabad

Tel 07930130200

themetropolehotel.co.in

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

Royal Retreat

■ Jambughoda Palace Hotel

A home for nature lovers, Jambughoda Palace Hotel offers you a trip down memory lane. It is the home of the erstwhile royal family of which a part has been turned into a hotel for guests. With a large part of the Jambughoda kingdom comprising forest land, the family, over the decades, has focussed on preserving the natural habitat and encouraging guests to enjoy a stay amidst nature. So, when you're here, a visit to the sanctuary is a must to spot panthers and four-horned antelopes among other animals. Historical records say that the former Maharana Vikramsinhji had even opposed unplanned development and urbanisation of the area thanks to which Jambughoda is one of the biggest green spaces in the state. The 20 rooms are basic and comfortable with no frills. It's the outdoors that the current owners, Karmaveersinh Rana and Yuvrani Bhavna Devi, want you to enjoy.

Outdoor Fun For city folk whose only brush with flora has

been through school text books, a visit to the woods here is a study in natural history with ample clusters of medicinal trees. The family says that Dr. Salim Ali and Dr. Gunwant Oza have spent time here studying the flora and fauna of the area.

Regal Feast The Home for Nature Lovers takes delight in hosting their guests in the wilderness. So, home cooked food, often drawn from the family's royal recipes, is served al fresco. Dinners can even be organised around camp fires on request. All the food here is slow cooked on wood and is based on recipes which have been fine tuned in the royal kitchen for generations. "We have tried to preserve the age old cooking methods and the flavours, which would have otherwise got lost in time," says Yuvrani Bhavna Devi.

Cost for a night Rs 2,500 onwards

At Jambughoda, a two hours drive from Vadodara in district Panchmahal **Tel** 02676241258; jambughoda.com

■ Karmaveersinh V Rana in the gardens of the Jambughoda Palace

Photograph by DINESH SHUKLA



NEW 3 MUST HAVES



1 NEW LAUNCHES / KARISHMA SHAH BAGS

Bag It

If you're looking for ways to dress up for the festivities coming up, then make a shopping trip to the just-opened store Karishma Shah Bags in Bodakdev, which has an extensive collection of attractive clutches. Bag designer Karishma Shah, 28, has been designing and manufacturing clutches for e-retailer Jabong for the past four years and has also been retailing from other stores. From bling to subtle charm, the clutches, says Shah, are meant for customers across all age groups. **Clutch Creativity** Shah's clutches come in a variety of materials and fabrics from silks

to wood. Her latest collection has clutches crafted out of sheesham wood and embellished with a rose knob.

Precious Ware In keeping with the demands of occasion wear, Shah has designed a collection that is studded with semi precious stones like jade, agate, rose quartz and turquoise that instantly dress up the look. There's also a new mother-of-pearl clutch making its debut soon.

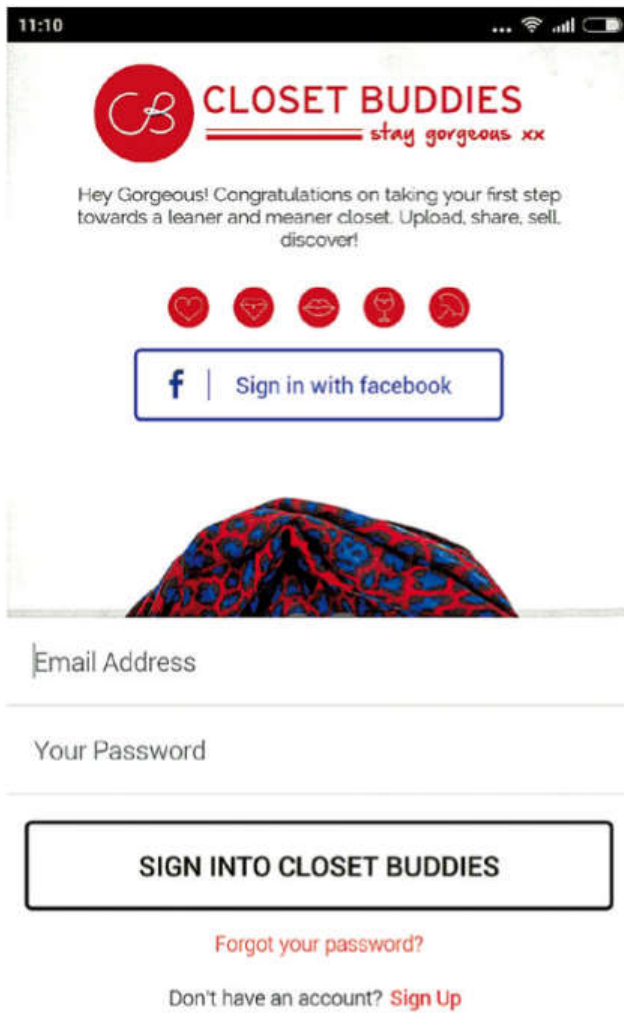
Price Range Rs 1,500 to 7,000

At Second floor, Awn Studio, opposite AIS School, Bodakdev, Ahmedabad

■ By Aditi Pai



Photograph by SHAILESH RAVAL



11:10

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2 Click in Style

Forgotten all about that steal from last year's sales season? Or is your once-upon-a-time favourite pair of jeans hidden away at the back of your cupboard? If you're among those who forget their old clothes after every new shopping spree, this newly-launched app, Closet Buddies, can help you organise your wardrobe. Juhi Bansal, an Ahmedabad-based fashion blogger and stylist who runs a popular blog by the same name, has designed this app that helps you digitise your entire wardrobe and save it on your phone. So, each time you search or browse, you can see that dress from five years ago or the stole that was handed down from your grandmother. She believes in bringing fashion lovers together so the app also has a feature through which you can follow other users and even lease or buy clothes and accessories from them. The app is less than a month old but already has over 1,000 users and has sealed a few fashion transactions. **Download from** goo.gl/0QiuCX

3 Wooden Wonders

If you don't like the new age furniture pieces, Ahmedabad-based entrepreneur Sanjay Ganeriwala, 48, will help you do up your home with vintage wood décor. His company, Woodencrafts, stands for wooden handicrafts and specialises in putting together a space done up with assembled iron, wood, paint and antique pieces. He can do up an entire space, right from the floor to the artifacts because "a rugged solid wood dining table will not match the flooring of Italian tiles." The pieces are all made at his 12,000 sq feet warehouse in Jodhpur and Ganeriwala has done up several Ahmedabad homes and the library at Mahatma Gandhi International School.

At D-506, Shiromani Complex, Nehrunagar, Ahmedabad; woodenfurniturehomedecor.com



5 TO LOOK FORWARD TO

1 Joy Ride ↘

OCTOBER 7

Ditch the cars and pick up your bikes instead. As the winters set in, set out for a tour of Ahmedabad on wheels, riding past iconic landmarks and seeing the city by night as you cycle along. The ABC Night Ride is organised by the Ahmedabad Bicycling Club, which hosts frequent cycling tours to spread awareness about cycling.

Details abcl.org.in

At Sabarmati Riverfront



2 Garba and Revelry ↘

OCTOBER 13 ONWARDS

Gujarat's most loved party time hits the state this month as Navratri begins on October 13, ushering in nine days of music, dandiya, garba and celebrations. Professional competitions, folk singers, remixed music and blingy designer wear mark this religious festival, which is celebrated with great fervor in Gujarat. In Ahmedabad, the scramble for the highly coveted passes at Karnavati Club, YMCA and NID garba has begun already.

At Various venues across Gujarat

Photograph by PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR



4 Memories Revisited

TILL SEPTEMBER 28

A Japanese photographer and researcher at the National Institute of Design in Gandhinagar, Shiho Kito has curated an exhibition that takes you down memory lane to the World War II. Called Emonogatari, which means 'picture stories' in Japanese, the collection has 73 photographs, videos and installations, all related to that period. At National Institute of Design, Paldi, Ahmedabad

3 Riot of Colours

OCTOBER 13 ONWARDS

Get doused in colour as you run for a good cause. The Color Run India, or the "happiest run on the planet", which debuts this year, is a five km long unique paint race where runners are doused in a different colour after every kilometer. Once at the finishing line, the party continues with a colour festival, a celebration that could well remind you of Holi. At Sabarmati Riverfront; Colorrunindia.com



5 Step up

TILL SEPTEMBER 20

Twist and twirl and match steps at this salsa and Latin dance festival, called Salsa Upanishads. The week-long festival will have dance competitions for participants aged between 15 and 55 years and bootcamps conducted Alex Diaz, a noted Bangalore-based salsa teacher.

Details 9687674520; salsahmedabad.com

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STYLE FILE

WITH EMBELLISHED KALIDAR ANARKALIS AND FLARED CHANIYA CHOLIS, GUJARAT DESIGNERS ARE GEARING UP FOR NAVRATRI DANDIYA NIGHTS AND THE FESTIVE SEASON



LAYERED ANARKALI

BY Darshi Shah & Bhavin Trivedi **AT** DSBT, 2A, Sudharshan Banglow, Nyay Marg, Ahmedabad



CHANIYA CHOLI

BY Noopur Anita Balia **AT** Young Trukk, A-13 Rameshwar Row House, Bodakdev, Ahmedabad



GEORGETTE ANARKALI

BY Jyoti Sachdev
Iye AT Rudraksh,
G-2/3, Tilak Complex,
Jetalpur Rd,
Vadodara



KHADI ENSEMBLE

BY Purvi Doshi
AT Purvi Doshi,
12, Sunrise Park
Road, Vastrapur,
Ahmedabad

THE RICKSHAW GALLERY

THE HUMBLE
THREE-WHEELER
IS READY TO ENTER
THE ART SPACE

By ANURITA RATHORE

Colourful, fun and accessible, autorickshaws have characteristically defined the Amdavadi city scape for years. This perhaps is what inspired Nayana Soparkar, 59, to curate and organise a first-of-its-kind exhibition dedicated to the three-wheeler, called Chhotti Rickshaw Baddi Savari. The art exhibition will showcase as many as 91 plaster-of-paris rickshaw models based on the artist's vision of this ubiquitous vehicle.

TRAVEL TALE Soparkar thought of this "novel idea" when she spotted the hoods of rickshaws from her art gallery housed in a high-rise. She says, "I thought, it would be very interesting to see how the artists portray the rickshaws in their own unique style." Suresh Sheth, Amit Ambalal, Natu Mistry, Ratilal Kansodaria, Mahendra Kadia, Hiren Patel, Karl Antao,

Nabibakhsh Mansoori, Bhairavi Modi, Rakesh Patel and Vipul Prajapati are some of the artists whose rickshaws would be 'parked' at the gallery.

MANY MOODS While one rickshaw has been painted in festive hues, another has been dressed up like a *dulhan* (bride). Some of the rickshaws celebrate the city's architecture (through illustrations) and others have *chai kitli*, foodie items, messages, etc. painted on them. One, which is bound to catch your eye is in a bright red colour, with the logo of a luxury car gracing its front and My Audi written on it. While most rickshaws have been designed to reflect the artist's imagination, some have used metals and accessories to turn their rickshaws into pieces of decorative art.

CHANGING LINES Soparkar, who started off with

being a microbiologist shares, "I developed interest in this field when I began helping my children with their school artwork. When I met my teacher at CN College of Fine Arts, he mentioned that sculpture would be an interesting field to pursue, and so I embarked upon the journey to being a sculptor."

Soparkar's first show was held at Amdavad ni Gufa, followed by another one at Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai, after which she decided to open Mantra Art Gallery with the aim of "interacting with artists and their works."

After showcasing artists from across the country and curating a variety of exhibitions, Soparkar now looks forward to Chhotti Rickshaw Baddi Savari. It is, after all, what many of her fellow artists call her "magnum opus".

AT Hutheesing Visual Art Centre, Kasturbhai Lalbhai Campus CEPT, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad
WHEN September 19 onwards

Soparkar with the
autorickshaw sculptures



INDIA
TODAY

SIMPLY MUMBAI

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

SHRADDHA NIGAM
AND MAYANK ANAND,
FASHION DESIGNERS

FABRIC OF CHANGE

DESIGNERS WHO ARE
CHANGING THE CITY'S
FASHIONSCAPE



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Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR

COVER STORY

Sustainable Seams

s-3

Find out how these Mumbaiers ensure that green remains the colour of the season.

Cover photo by MANDAR DEODHAR

OUR PICK of the month

Flights of Fancy

October 7

“Could it be that the answers are manufactured with the words that you use in the questions? And now a days we have so many answers, that we have forgotten to ask the real question.” Through his latest act as part of The Park’s New Festival 2015, EnFlightment, Rupesh Tillu looks back and relives outlandish moments from his travels across the globe over nine years, giving him a perspective to connect the dots and ask the real questions, understand a hierarchical patterns in our society. At Rosewood The Park
Timings 8.30



Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplymumbai@intoday.com



SUSTAINABLE SEAMS

FIND OUT HOW THESE MUMBAIKARS ENSURE THAT GREEN REMAINS THE COLOUR OF THE SEASON

By MOEENA HALIM

Cool As Cotton

APURVA KOTHARI, 40, SHWETA DELIWALA, 37 *No Nasties*

Shweta Deliwala,
Co-founder, No Nasties

When Apurva Kothari read about the ridiculously high number of farmer suicides in the country, he decided to find a way to help, and that was the motivation to set up No Nasties. After working in the US, Kothari and his fashion designer wife Shweta Deliwala decided to return to India to run a company that uses only organic cotton and follows fair-trade policies.

✿ **KEEPING IT SIMPLE** Deliwala, who

heads the product development team, says designing for an online audience is tricky. "Clothes have to be easy to wear, stylish yet simple; the silhouettes, simple and easy to wear, and the colours, neutral and monochromatic," says Deliwala.

✿ **THINKING GREEN** According to the duo, cotton farming in India makes up 55 percent of the pesticide usage, even though it only occupies five percent of farm land. At No Nasties, their policy includes no genetically modified seeds, artificial pesticides and toxic dyes. Chetna Organic, a farmer-owned co-operative that

focuses on the welfare of cotton farmers, connected them to Rajlakshmi Cotton Mills, who they now work with. "Both the farms and the factories are certified by third-party auditors, which assures us that they are not cutting corners," says Deliwala. Even their packaging and branding material is eco-friendly. Their business cards and tags are made with recycled cardboard, and the clothes are packed in reusable organic-cotton bags. "No plastics, no nasties," she says.

✿ **PRICE** Rs 599 to Rs 2,199
✿ **AVAILABLE AT** nonasties.in



Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA

Anavila Misra,
Founder, Anavila

Linen Love

ANAVILA MISRA, 39 *Anavila*

After working for several years in rural clusters with her alma mater, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Delhi and the Ministry of Rural Development, designer Anavila Misra decided to work with organic linen that was being manufactured in a factory in Kolkata.

✿ **GOING NATURAL** In 2012, she launched her clothing line, Anavila. The name, which means “pure” in Sanskrit, rightly describes Misra’s use of sustainable, luxurious textiles with which she has been making contemporary saris and is now planning to include tunics and dresses. The raw materials for the linen she uses come from Belgium and France and are grown naturally, without pesticides and chemicals. “At the state-of-the-art Jayshree Mills in Kolkata, they take the coarse stems and process it into a beautiful yarn,” she says.

✿ **DRAPE IT RIGHT** By choosing to design contemporary saris, Misra helped the movement towards popularising the sari before the now trending 100-sari pact. Yet, refer to her as a sustainable designer, and it is obvious it has become her pet peeve. “I realised that you’re forcing weavers to do something that doesn’t make commercial sense to them,” she explains. “We can’t help the weaver until we find practical use for those weaves. Because like it or not, only crafts, which have pull from the markets and manage to get them profits, will work in the long run,” she adds. But what makes the designer feel optimistic about the future is that she now finds more and more young students eager to work in rural clusters across the country.

✿ **PRICE** Saris from Rs 9,500 to 25,000

✿ **AVAILABLE AT** Anavila Studio, next to Hakkasan, Waterfield Road, Bandra West

High Design

BOMBAY HEMP COMPANY (BOHECO)

Claiming to be the only company in the entire world that deals with hemp handloom fabrics, the seven boys behind BOHECO have been working tirelessly for two years to get hemp in the limelight in India. The idea of working with hemp came to them while they were still students at HR College, studying commerce. “We worked on Project Chirag, a rural electrification project, through which we visited several villages and realised that just providing water or electricity was not enough. We needed to help the farmers in a more sustained manner,” says Yash Kotak, director of project and quality management.

✿ **MAGIC FABRIC** It was around the same time that Jahan Peston James, director of strategy and communications, was travelling in Australia and came across hemp production in an extremely prosperous village there. “While we had seen cannabis growing wildly across rural India, this was the first time we realised how useful cannabis sativa could be,” recalls James. This particular strain of

weed grows wildly across Kashmir, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab and Uttarakhand. BOHECO has found artisans who have been taught to weave fabric from hemp by their ancestors. “The tradition has been there for centuries. It’s just that urban India and the government has been ignorant of it,” says Kotak. The team, which also includes Sumit Shah, 24, is now working closely with the governments of various states as well as the Textile Ministry. Currently, BOHECO is able to source seven different weaves that can be used for upholstery, shoes and bags. Until they are able to create a finer quality fabric, they are importing hemp to design and retail crisp white shirts and a black printed T-shirt through their brand, The Hemp Couture.

✿ **SUPER CROP** What’s most crucial to them now is developing the right kind of hemp seed for agricultural purposes suited to Indian climatic conditions. Their goal is that one day the super crop will be able to provide for *roti, kapda* and *makaan*.

✿ **PRICE** Rs 1000 to Rs 2,500 for garments and Rs 550 to Rs 1,800 for fabrics

✿ **AVAILABLE AT** boheco.org

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA



(From left to right) Yash Kotak, 25, Avinash Pandya, 25, Chirag Tekchandane, 25, Delzaad Deolaliwala, 25, Jahan Peston James, 25, Sanvar Oberoi, 25

Handloom Heroes

MAYANK ANAND, 35, SHRADDHA NIGAM, 38*Mayank Anand Shraddha Nigam*

Ever since actors Mayank Anand and Shraddha Nigam decided to turn fashion designers and launch their own label in 2010, they knew it would lead to a commitment to handloom and the weavers. “Weaving is the second largest economic activity in India after agriculture. There are about 53 lakh weavers, but the number is dwindling, because most of their children don’t want to stay and carry forward their legacy,” says Anand.

✿ **WORKING BACKWARDS** The duo is striving to make weaving a lucrative profession for the next generation. Sustainability is equally important. Rather than sketch their ideas, their first step is to study the fabrics that are available to them from their weavers in Maheshwar, Bhagalpur, Assam and Kolkata.

✿ **PRETTY IN PATCHWORK** Strong believers in the fundamentals of reuse, reduce, recycle, repurpose and recreate, the designers have been, for the past two years, collecting rejects as well as fabrics that would go to waste. “While showcasing our collection at last year’s fashion week, we draped our garments with shawls made of sustainably created cottons in the final round. This was our way of standing up for what we believe in,” says Anand. This year’s collection—The Textile Brigade—included a lot of patchwork fabric. They also tied up with NGOs such as Gramshree, which empowers women by offering them vocational training. They’re going a step further for their next collection and using wildy grown cotton, known as Kala Cotton.

✿ **PRICE** Rs 4,000 to about Rs 24,000

✿ **AVAILABLE AT** mayankanandshraddhanigam.com

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR

Shraddha Nigam (left);
Mayank Anand



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DR BALASAHEB V KHADSHADE, MBBS, MD DR SNEHALATA B KHADSHADE, MBBS, DA

With over 6 years of successful practice in obstetrics, gynaecology and Infertility, Dr Balasaheb V Khadshade, MBBS, MD has expanded his existing set up of Yashoda Maternity Hospital into a multi-speciality hospital- YASHODA HOSPITAL along with his wife Dr Snehalata B Khadshade, MBBS, DA. She is presently working as a Clinical Associate, Obstetrician and Gynecologist.

FACILITIES:

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Going Organic

SHISHIR GOENKA, 50 *Do U Speak Green*

When talking of sustainable and eco-friendly clothing, it is hard to ignore Do U Speak Green (DUSG). Shishir Goenka launched his company, Fusion Clothing Company, in 1992, but it wasn't until much later that he began manufacturing organic clothing. "It was my passion for the environment that led me to launch Do U Speak Green," he says. The brand was India's first to produce and sell organic clothing, he says.

✿ GOING THE EXTRA MILE "It was a challenge, but we studied the movement of organic clothing in the international market and adapted it here. Our core ethos is to use the planet's resources intelligently, provide safe working conditions and give back to the manufacturing communities," says the entrepreneur. Apart from fashion for men and women, they now retail clothes for children and make yoga wear. "Our yoga wear designs are inspired by wildlife, nature and spirituality. We work extensively with freelance designers from India and abroad," says Goenka. But the biggest challenge is getting people to spend more to buy an organic T-shirt.

✿ OUT OF THE BOX Apart from using organic cotton, DUSG also makes use of bamboo fabric. Made from the pulp of the bamboo grass, it is considered one of the most sustainable fibres. What's great is that unlike synthetic fabrics that incorporate petroleum additives, bamboo fabric is completely biodegradable.

✿ PRICE Rs 675 to Rs 1,850

✿ AVAILABLE AT douspeakgreen.in

Photograph by MANDAR DEODHAR





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